

We have not yet found a formula to extend old age, and I hope we shall not until we find a formula to make it more comfortable. But there is no reason except sheer stupidity why in this dominion, a country so richly blessed with almost everything necessary, we cannot make existence comfortable for all in their old age or those for whom we cannot provide profitable employment. At the present time in every city there is a considerable number of persons between ages of sixty-five and seventy on relief. And those on relief who have reached the age of fifty-five or perhaps fifty and who have been unemployed for any considerable length of time will certainly never work again. It would be a humane act on the part of this government to take these people off relief and give them an old age pension. It is sad to see these people waiting in line for their vouchers or relief in whatever form it is given.

The amount of the old age pension should also be increased. That is imperative. I hope the government will give this matter very serious consideration and before this session is over do something that will bring a greater measure of security and independence to people who have reached the age of sixty or sixty-five and can no longer find profitable employment. And let us do it in such a way as they have done it in our sister dominion of New Zealand, so that it is not charity, but returns to them a part of what they themselves have already put into the country.

Mr. L. A. MUTCH (Winnipeg South): I welcome the introduction of this resolution because it gives me an opportunity to express in a few words some thoughts which have been in my mind for the past three years in connection with the age limit for old age pensions. I represent a city constituency of which a large proportion of the people are employed by either the two great railway systems or the department stores and other institutions where the rule of retirement at the age of sixty-five has become almost absolute. Even in the civil service this rule is recognized by the enforced retirement of civil servants at the age of sixty-five.

One of the problems I have had to face time after time in the last three years has been that of the gap between the age of sixty-five and the age of seventy, when the old age pension comes into effect. For a moment or two I should like to speak to the house about the situation of the railway men in my constituency—and I imagine the situation is the same in every other constituency—with respect to old age pensions. During the last five or six years these men, particularly shop men

[Mr. MacInnis.]

but also men engaged in the running trades who did not have a great deal of seniority, were very fortunate indeed if they were working sixteen or eighteen days a month, and many of them for periods of months had no employment at all. These men, who are coming now to the age of sixty-five, were caught at a time when the average man was completing the buying of his home and providing for the education of his children, a period during which he was under great expense. Many of these people are now bankrupt at the age of sixty-five, and they find themselves approaching this gap between sixty-five and seventy. Many of them to my knowledge within the last two or three years have had to go on direct relief, or in the alternative they have been thrown upon the kindness of their children, who in many instances are completely unable to provide anything like adequate care for them. It does not seem good enough to me that men and women who have served as these men have, not only in this particular occupation but in many occupations, should have to face that difficulty.

I do not propose to enter into a discussion of the cost of lowering the age from seventy to sixty-five, and at this time I think I should refrain from discussing whether or not it might be advisable to introduce the principle of contributions to old age pensions, because as yet we do not know what is proposed with respect to unemployment insurance. It has been a dream of mine, or should I say a thought of mine, that perhaps when we reach the point of working out an unemployment insurance proposition it may be possible to have something of a joint nature worked out in regard to old age pensions and unemployment insurance. So I am prepared to wait a little longer to find out what is going to be done; but I should like to urge upon the government at this time the claims of these people, not only those who have not worked at all but particularly those who have been on part time at greatly reduced wages during the last six or seven years, and who are now approaching the age of sixty-five. Frankly I do not know what their numbers are, even in my own constituency; but I do know there are many of them, and it might be that the government could in this way better than in any other contribute to the relief of the older unemployed.

I am not one of those who are greatly impressed with the idea that if we lop off ten thousand workmen at the age of sixty we shall be putting on another ten thousand workmen at the age of nineteen or twenty. I have yet to be convinced that by taking