

# THE 2 SENATE DEBATES

THIRD SESSION—TENTH PARLIAMENT

SPEECH

OF THE

HON. SIR RICHARD CARTWRIGHT

ON

## OLD AGE PENSIONS

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1907.

Hon. Mr. McMULLEN—I observe the question of old age pensions is being discussed in other places. I desire to inquire:

1. Have the government had this matter under consideration?

2. Whether a Bill dealing with this or any similar object has been prepared?

3. Whether the government propose to introduce any legislation on the subject during this session?

4. Whether, if such a Bill as above referred to, has been prepared, the government will cause it to be laid on the table for the information of the House?

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—The matter to which my hon. friend has alluded is one of no common interest and no common importance. I have no doubt myself that within a comparatively short space of time this question of old age pensions, or a somewhat similar question, will most undoubtedly be engaging the attention of many legislatures, as indeed it has already in the mother country and in several of our sister colonies. I am free to admit that I have always regarded the case of honest, industrious men who have for many years led a life of toil, and at the end of their lives find themselves either by accident or misfortune, or some other cause of a similar kind, thrown on the charity of their neighbours or their relatives, as pre-eminently deserving the compassion and consideration of everybody, and if it were

possible to confine the question of old age pensions to that particular class, I do not know that I, and I dare say that many other people would be of the same opinion, would object to introducing some such measure. But this is a subject to which I have given for a considerable space of time a good deal of attention. It is pre-eminently a question on which there are two sides. The one side is the side I have presented; the other side, which undoubtedly deserves our most serious consideration, is this—what would be the effect of a scheme of old age pensions on the community at large? How far would it discourage thrift? How far would it discourage self-reliance; and, what is quite as important if such a scheme were adopted, how would it affect the working men themselves? My own impression is that, in a great many cases, such a scheme would be found to encourage extravagance, and the result would be that the thrifty, industrious working man would find himself compelled ultimately to bear the burden of his less industrious and possibly dissolute companion. I may observe in passing, that this question of old age pensions, although it is sometimes confounded with it, has nothing, in my judgment, to do with the case of pensions awarded to civil or military servants of any government.