

citizenship and in the development of this land as the establishment of an old age pension system. Having before us the experience of other countries, we could deal with this matter more intelligently. If there have been failures in other systems, we can avoid them in ours. I would say to the hon. Minister of Finance, who, I apprehend, is going to respond for the Government, that his duty in this respect has become almost imperative and that he will be remiss to the country if he attempts to palter with this question or put off dealing with it until a later session. The sooner my hon. friend realizes the importance of this question and proceeds to introduce the necessary enactments to put upon the statute books an old age pension system the sooner he will be doing an act of which he will be proud and the sooner he will be fulfilling his duty to the whole Canadian people.

Mr. D. O. ALGUIRE (Stormont): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a few remarks that may perhaps explain some of the statements that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Macdonald) has referred to. He referred to the statement that on this, as on many other questions, there is no public opinion in Canada, and he spoke in somewhat disparaging terms of the fact that there is no public opinion on the question of old age pensions. That would be a very difficult problem to prove, because the public in Canada have very positive opinions about many questions. With reference to the countries of which the hon. gentleman has spoken where he says the sentiment is very strongly in favour of the old age pension system, the conditions in those countries cannot be cited as being parallel with the condition in Canada. I do not want to be considered as speaking against old age pensions, but I look upon the question as an academic one which will have to be settled at some time when this country has arrived at a condition which requires it in the same sense that Great Britain and the countries of Europe, Australia and New Zealand require it. The situation and conditions are different on this North American continent, a fact which is evident by this one thing. We are all of the Anglo-Saxon race. Throughout these other countries they have, for some reason, a political conscience that compels them to give old age pensions. Throughout the United States and Canada we have not arrived at that condition yet, and when we do arrive

[Mr. Macdonald.]

at it there must be some good and sufficient reason. I shall not speak about Great Britain, because the cases of Canada and Great Britain are not at all parallel, but the conditions may be said to be somewhat parallel between Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The hon. gentleman has not referred to New Zealand particularly, but I am a little more familiar with the conditions of that country, having read a good deal upon the subject, and with the circumstances under which the old age pension system was introduced.

The fact is that the old age pension system was forced upon New Zealand by the condition of the country. New Zealand passed from one form of what we might call social legislation to another, and they were compelled to go from one form of social legislation to another by force of circumstances. They could not get out of it, and old age pensions was one of the things that developed along that line. When they introduced their Act to expropriate public lands, or the lands that were held by large companies and large land-owners, it was looked upon as a radical and outrageous trespass upon private rights; but they thought they were justified in the course they were pursuing. Having taken that step they had to go a little farther. Loan companies would not loan money except at a high interest, and they had to go into the money loaning business, and they passed on from loaning money to having labour troubles. They took the stand that, I think, all the world will eventually take of labour troubles. The public at large

5 p.m. said: The labour unions may win or lose, the employer may win or lose, but we are the people who suffer and we are going to see to it that this war shall not be carried on. So they established a board to see how best these questions could be settled. That drove them next to the question as to what should be the minimum wage. In establishing this minimum wage they did not take into consideration the circumstances of the industry affected by it. They established the minimum wage on the basis of what it costs a man to live, and were entirely indifferent to the condition of the industry by which the man was employed. The industry might say: We cannot go on and pay that wage; we will have to shut up our shop, and if they did say that the people of New Zealand said: Well then, get your industry out of here; if it cannot pay that wage we do not want it here at