

In this case they were a little more tardy; it took them longer to see the light. On December 11, as the Prime Minister will recall, because he watched the convention with more than usual interest, a platform was adopted calling for retirement insurance; and the Minister of Finance, who is not always amenable to new ideas, said a few weeks ago in the house—he repeated it to-night—that he had come to the position where he favours this kind of thing as well.

While the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard talked about the Minister of Finance not being able to move in the right direction, may I say to him that there is still some hope for the minister, from what he said to-night; and although I cannot agree that he has moved far enough, at least he is moving in the direction where public opinion and the best thought in Canada is moving, namely, in line with the platform to which I have referred.

In one of the sections of this platform on old age pensions the age is reduced until such time as the retirement insurance scheme becomes fully operative. I say to the government that while they were somewhat longer in this case than they were in innumerable others, in connection with which they have adopted our platform, it is encouraging and refreshing to the people of Canada that a once great party like the government party in this country is at last seeing the light, even though it takes a convention of another party to give them that courage and initiative. However, I do not wish to detract from the credit they will normally obtain for that. I was rather expecting that the Prime Minister would rise and give his usual answer covering all matters of this kind. I wondered why he did not rise when the hon. member for Comox-Alberni was discussing the fatherhood of the movement; I wondered why he did not go back to 1911 or 1917 and say, "If you look carefully you will find it in my book called 'Industry and Humanity'." However, that is one of the things for which he will have to give credit elsewhere.

I say to the minister that this is not the right way to bring in such legislation. As the hon. member for Comox-Alberni so well said, when the war is over and the War Measures Act is no longer operative in Canada, by the minister's own admission this old age pension increase actually drops out of sight. We should have had at this session legislation dealing with this matter, and I protest at this time against the laxity of the government's policy which left this matter to be discussed within a few minutes of the time when the session of parliament closes.

Mr. REID: There are two matters to which I wish to call the attention of the minister in connection with the regulations affecting old age pensioners, and even at this late hour I must take a moment or two to place those matters before him and to ask for consideration of them. First of all, like the hon. member for Comox-Alberni, I was sorry indeed that the discussion did not come up earlier in the session. I am of the opinion that if it had come up earlier in the session, more than fifty per cent of the members of the house would have participated in the discussion. While the statement of the Minister of Finance this afternoon does not go as far as many members from British Columbia and other provinces would have liked, still I wish to say that in my opinion the old age pensioners throughout Canada will be appreciative of that announcement. I should like also to compliment the minister upon the statement he made in reply to the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard. Rightly or wrongly there is a feeling throughout the country that the minister is definitely against increasing the old age pension and lowering the age limit, and I was delighted to hear him refute that this evening.

Before mentioning the regulations with which I wish to deal, I should like to say that there are hon. members from other provinces who, sometimes, in the corridors and elsewhere, make scathing remarks about the time we occupy in talking about old age pensions. They cannot understand why hon. members from some provinces should advocate a minimum of \$1 a day. I am not going to make any disparaging remarks about provinces that pay as little as \$11 a month, but I want to tell those hon. members that their attitude reminds me, as a trade unionist, of the artisans who consistently refused to join a trade union. After the unions had battled for higher wages and better hours, however, they were perfectly willing to take advantage of the results the trades unions had received. I believe the fight that has been put up by some provinces, particularly British Columbia, in regard to old age pensions is bringing results in now, and I am sure the other provinces will be only too glad to take advantage of the struggle that has been waged through the years.

One matter I want to take up with the minister has to do with the regulations laid down by the dominion, and the other has to do with the interpretation of those regulations by the Department of Finance, which administers the old age pensions. At the beginning of the war the regulations provided that the pension authorities were required to consider assigned