

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I am trying to get hon. gentlemen to give consideration to this measure outside of its political aspects, but it is very difficult to do so. My hon. friend from Lunenburg would quote a Liberal newspaper, but after all, that is only a newspaper. We know, each and every member knows, that the people of Canada are in sympathy with these proposals, and what I am trying to impress on the House is that we would be better advised, and would be doing more for the principle of old age pensions, if we accepted this legislation, which is the same legislation that went through the last campaign. Then, after the scheme has come into operation and we have had experience with it, we shall be able to do as they have done in Great Britain, in France, Germany, Australia and the United States—amend our legislation from time to time to meet the conditions that arise. But let us at this time first establish the principle that so far as we are concerned, the parliament of Canada, is desirous of bringing into force a uniform pension scheme. If we do that, then surely we have accomplished our purpose, and I will say to my hon. friends opposite, who to-day are suggesting what they did not suggest last year, that they are endangering a principle which I know they are so anxious to establish in Canada.

Mr. HEAPS: Did I not suggest an increase in the federal allowance last year?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Yes.

Mr. HEAPS: Am I not taking exactly the same attitude as I did a year ago?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I do not blame the hon. member. If I were in his position I would do likewise, but we have got down to cases on this thing. The government has been seriously attacked this afternoon for its want of liberality.

Mr. McGIBBON: Hear, hear.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): My hon. friend says "hear, hear." But what is in his mind at this time is to establish the principle, and although he may have advised, and properly so, that the government should be more liberal and should make it sixty-five or seventy per cent, last year the House of Commons did not accept that, and I do not believe the House will accept it this year.

Mr. McGIBBON: Put it to a vote.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): That would be a political vote, and not in the interest of old age pensions.

Mr. McGIBBON: That is my hon. friend's opinion only.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): That is the opinion that will be generally held throughout Canada, and my hon. friends opposite will realize it before long.

Mr. ARTHURS: Is that a desire or a threat?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Because the taxpayers who are interested in this proposal are desirous of passing a measure that will bring into existence a uniform system of old age pensions throughout Canada. The amount to be paid to the pensioners can be discussed next year or the year after. Let us establish the principle, and from time to time we can amend the regulation.

Mr. McQUARRIE: How can it be uniform if all the provinces do not go into the scheme?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): In this respect we can only judge and make deductions from what has gone before. We know that in legislation of this character, where the Dominion government has given to the provinces from their treasury amounts of money which they did not require to give, the provinces have always been anxious to accept and have accepted.

Mr. ARTHURS: After a long period.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I have no doubt that, if the bill becomes law, throughout Canada in every province there will be people who will see that the provincial governments accept their responsibility, and having accepted their responsibility then you will have what we are contending for, a uniform pension for aged Canadian people.

Mr. ARTHURS: How many provinces came into the various schemes which have preceded this proposition—that is the good roads scheme, and the technical education scheme—and when? How long did they delay?

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Every one.

Mr. ARTHURS: Eventually.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): They all came in; some debated the matter for a time, perhaps a year or two, but not longer than they should have, because public opinion is what controls provincial governments as it controls dominion governments, and I have no doubt that if this legislation becomes law public opinion in the provinces will be such that the provincial governments will accept what the Dominion government gives them for the care of those for whom they are responsible to-day.