

with the possibility of having to carry on the original scheme increasing to 100 per cent the amount that is going to the provinces, or take over the entire administration itself. I would therefore suggest that the Prime Minister institute steps immediately to clear the way for the possibility of the federal government itself at the earliest possible moment administering the old age pension scheme, so that if parliament is asked to make any larger contribution out of the federal treasury it will be sure that it will have the right to administer the moneys in its own hands, and that no exception can be taken to its administering the scheme in its entirety. Indeed it should secure this right where the amount of the federal contribution exceeds 50 per cent as will be the case when the bill based on this resolution is enacted.

The bill was passed, and the amount of the contribution is now 75 per cent. Again, on July 28, 1931, as recorded at page 4230 of *Hansard*, the present Prime Minister said:

My remarks were all intended to convey the hope that the government would move as rapidly as possible towards the administration of the scheme in its entirety in order completely to relieve the provinces of that responsibility. . . . The government of the day had been advised by the Department of Justice as to its authority and rights and powers in the matter, and as a result of the advice given the government reached the necessary conclusion that unless it were to be made a contributory scheme, which at the time we were not prepared to consider, the federal government could not inaugurate an old age pension scheme in any other way than by grants to the provinces. That was the reason why the government of the day made the grant of 50 per cent; it did so with a view to bringing about throughout Canada a uniform system of old age pensions and also with a view to giving time to remove any constitutional impediment to the dominion taking over the entire scheme. It was felt that the fact that all the provinces would be prepared to accept an old age pension scheme on the lines laid down to secure uniformity would of itself be the strongest evidence that it was desirable to have such a scheme on a national scale, administered federally.

What has happened? Since that time every province in the dominion has come in. In the letters I have received from the premier of British Columbia, he has endorsed the increasing of the amount to \$30 a month and has endorsed the proposal for reducing the age limit to sixty-five for men and sixty for women. The province of Quebec, which condemned the principle of old age pensions as unsound, has now accepted that principle as sound, and the premier of that province, according to his statements appearing in the press in the reports of the Quebec legislature, asked the government to consider reducing the age limit to sixty-five years. In Nova Scotia, one of the provinces that condemned the principle as unsound in 1925, they have now agreed that the ceiling should be lifted to \$30 a month. The Prime Minister, with his remarkable ability to look into the future, saw that once

the principle of old age pensions was established as a sound one, public opinion would force the provincial governments to bring it into being. They have followed that course, and to-day throughout this dominion 185,000 aged Canadians in a condition of dire poverty are getting the benefit of a meagre \$20 a month. Has the time not come for us as a parliament to continue that work, to go forward with an amendment to the constitution, as the Prime Minister suggested, to bring about the nationalization of the institution and establish a scheme of old age pensions under which every beneficiary throughout the dominion will receive the same quantum of benefit?

I should like to draw the attention of hon. members to the difference between our attitude toward old age pensions and that of Australia. I have the greatest sympathy for the Minister of Finance in the problems he is facing, and I have no hesitation in repeating what I have said before, that I do not think we have ever had a minister more devoted or more alive to his responsibilities. With the system under which he is operating I do not think there has been another minister who performed his duties as well as they have been performed by the present minister. Probably he is the last orthodox Minister of Finance we shall ever have in Canada, but it is altogether probable that long before he has ended his days of useful service he will see the light and become a practical administrator not of sound money but of sane national finance.

Now the minister tells us that it would be a terrible thing if we brought the old age pension up to \$30 a month, because probably we would get an increasing cycle of rising prices that would spiral into an inflationary St. Vitus dance. Whoever heard of inflation coming from the expenditures of old age pensioners? Yet that is what we were told here the other night. They are fighting this war in Australia, from positions more dangerous than our own, and they are putting everything they have into it just as we are. Does anyone suggest that their old age pension scheme has injured their war effort or caused them to suffer from inflation? But Canadians are so far behind Australians that it should be an inspiration to us to move onward. The population of Canada is 11,566,000. The population of Australia is 7,000,000, so that we have 64 per cent more population than they have. The number of old age pensioners in Canada, taking the figure for 1942, is 185,000; in Australia it is 275,000. They have invalid pensioners numbering 60,000; we have none in Canada. Pensioners in Canada total 185,000, and in Australia, 336,000, so that they have 150,000