

in Australia it is \$250. I am inclined to think—whether on account of our climate or other conditions I need not go into at this juncture—that our income should be at least \$300. It could fairly be urged that the income which the recipient must have before being entitled to the supplement might be raised in Canada in order to work co-ordinately with the increased amount, which we regard as being fixed at \$300. One objection that is made to a pension is, 'If we are going to give pensions, nobody will work in Canada.' But before leaving the point I was making in regard to my computation of forty per cent of the 333,000 people who would not seek for the supplement, I may say I did not take into consideration the figures quoted by my hon. friend from Richmond as to the number who are already recipients of bounty from various sources, and who of course would be excluded from any Act we might put on our statute books. The suggestion that the prospect of a pension will tend to make men thriftless, is made hastily by persons who have not considered the question. The effect of the old age pension in Australia is shown in the following statement:

The objection which has sometimes been raised to the payment of old-age pensions on the score of the tendency to thriftlessness thereby induced is one which, in Australia, at all events, is not accorded much weight, the general feeling being that the number of cases in which the prospect of a pension of, say 10s. per week from sixty-five onwards would lead to thriftlessness in earlier years, is so small as to be practically negligible.

That is an answer from the Australian standpoint and a similar answer can be given from English experience; and having regard to the fact that this money is not paid absolutely, and that commissioners would scrutinize every particular case—and in Australia and England a large number are rejected—it seems to me that the answer of Australia is the one which is self-evident. The ladies who gave evidence before the committee showed that the cases where the intervention of the State was not only desirable but absolutely necessary were numerous in all classes of the population and particularly among widows. Eliminating from the consideration the drunkard and the man who has deliberately failed to maintain himself, to reason that the ordinary Canadian farmer or artisans is going to say when he gets to be 50, 'I am not going to work any longer because when I am 65 the State is going to keep me,' is too violent a presumption to be given any consideration. The object of this pension is to eliminate

the pests of society, those who do not work. To say that the old person, after having rendered to the State all the service that any citizen could do by honest labour and close attention to his duties, shall not be regarded seems to be a proposition that should be given no consideration whatever. I have heard hon. gentlemen say 'We have established an annuity system in Canada, why do they not buy annuities?' That is very fine in theory, but nobody who has grown up from the people and mixed with the men in the workshop, in the mines, and on the farms, and who knows the duties and responsibilities of parentage would say that there is any percentage of that class of men who can go out and buy annuities to provide for themselves in their old age. From the time they are united, the father and mother have to assume responsibilities until the boys and girls are educated and sent out into the world, to form new associations and new attachments and the father and mother are perhaps left alone in their old age under the very roof tree from which they started. The plain people of this country are no different from the plain people of any other English speaking country. For myself I have never been able to appreciate the suggestion that these people should buy annuities and that then they will be all right. I think it is desirable, and I make this request in no complaining mood, that hon. gentlemen in this House should proceed to consider this question in a most serious way. Men who are prosperous and who have for the time being everything to gratify their tastes, whether in an excessive or in a moderate way, are perhaps too apt to forget the responsibilities which will come to them in later years. Here in this young land where we are laying the foundations for the future, where our actual achievements have been great in providing facilities of all kinds for the country that is to be, it does seem to me that Canada would do well to at once proceed to place upon the statute books a system under which the aged poor of this land would be guaranteed that certainty of freedom from penury which would not only produce a keener interest in public affairs in this country in a great degree, but would create a class of citizenship such as we have never had before and as exists in no other part of the empire. The investment is not too great. The necessity of the situation seems to me imperative. But can we afford this at the moment? Let me say no expenditure that Canada could make would bring such splendid returns in the nature of our