



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
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CANADA'S NEW PROGRAMME FOR OLD AGE SECURITY

A broadcast by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. Paul Martin, over the Trans-Canada Network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, on July 3, 1951.

CANADA PROVIDES FOR OLD AGE SECURITY

We have just celebrated the 84th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada.

As we begin the 85th year of our national life we find that, in spite of temporary difficulties, the Canadian economy has never been more buoyant. Sir Wilfrid Laurier once said that this would be Canada's Century. Certainly, we have come a long way towards making his dream come true. As proof of the Government's confidence in Canada's productive capacity and of its faith in Canada's future this year will be marked by a programme to provide greatly increased security for our senior citizens.

This programme to provide assistance for those in need at 65 and a pension - without a means test - for all Canadians at 70 will be implemented by two Acts of Parliament. One, the Old Age Assistance Act, was passed by Parliament last week. The other, the Old Age Security Act, will be presented for Parliament's approval later this year.

It is a symbol of our progress and of our concern for social justice that in these critical times -- when so much of our productive strength must be diverted to defence requirements -- we still give priority to the well-being of our people. When this new programme for old age security is fully in effect, all Canadians in the 65 to 69 age group who are in need of assistance will receive it, and all those who are 70 and over will receive a monthly pension, without means test.

By these new measures for old age assistance and universal pensions, 860,000 of our older citizens will benefit. These are the men and women who have served our country so faithfully during the first half of this century.

ALL PARTIES APPROVE NEW PROGRAMME

Parliament passed our present Old Age Pensions Act in 1927. Since that time, a great deal of thought has been given to this question of providing for the well-being of our older citizens, and many improvements have been made in the original Act. In the past four years, almost as much has been done to improve Old Age Pensions as in the preceding twenty.

There was, however, no question in our minds that more could be done.