

will come from the war appropriation, because this action is to be taken under the War Measures Act.

Mr. NEILL: The minister says that it will be taken under the War Measures Act. Is there any possibility such as that when the War Measures Act disappears, this increase will be taken off again?

Mr. ILSLEY: It would, unless legislative action is taken at that time or in the meantime. I said in the statement that even if we had time to take legislative action at the end of this session, probably it would not be desirable to make any permanent amendments to the Old Age Pensions Act while this matter of old age pensions is under study by the special House of Commons committee on social security. I do not know what will be worked out about old age pensions or social security.

Mr. NEILL: The report of the committee is before the house.

Mr. ILSLEY: Yes, but it is not adopted. There are suggestions for consideration and so on. There is much more work to be done on that, and there is the question of constitutional amendment, whether one is to take place or not, and the financial arrangements as between the dominion and the provinces. There is a temporary arrangement now between the dominion and the provinces which it may be desirable to continue if we are to take on certain responsibilities, although the present one is strictly temporary.

Mr. GRAYDON: May I try to set an example at this late hour by refraining from speaking at any length on a matter of this kind, even in spite of the fact that there are so many branches of political thought that are so anxious to adopt this rather important baby known as the old age pension idea. I listened with not a little amusement to those who were attempting to claim fatherhood for the movement. My hon. friend to my right has disposed, at least in his own mind, of any suggestion that any of my predecessors in office had anything to do with it, although I must confess I am unable to agree with that. I was hoping that the Prime Minister would rise at once and contradict him, because I know that the Prime Minister would not agree with that for a moment.

There are some interesting aspects of this proposed legislation coming in as it did only in the dying days of the session but on the very day on which we hope the session will die, and that fact may have more significance than may appear on the surface.

[Mr. Ilesley.]

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Not die, but adjourn.

Mr. GRAYDON: According to the explanation the Prime Minister gives of the terms "British empire" and "British commonwealth of nations", these also may be regarded as interchangeable expressions. That is the situation with regard to adjournments, unless the Prime Minister is suggesting that we are going to have a lengthy session when we convene again, which I do not think he intends. Apart from these technicalities the government really cannot advance seriously the idea that this legislation has had the attention it should have received, because if it was good legislation on the last day of the session, it should have been good legislation on the first day. Anticipating what the minister will try to say in reply, may I say that either the provinces or the dominion were in default in the discharge of their duties in that they did not call for some conference at an earlier stage to discuss this matter and have it threshed out and decided.

The minister took the position, I believe, that he would wait until the provinces wrote to him indicating what they intended to do. He was not going to take the initiative. There may have been perfectly good reasons from the point of view of saving some money for the dominion government in his taking that attitude, but certainly from the point of view of really grasping the problem and coming to grips with it, I suggest that somebody was to blame for having left the matter until this last day of the session. It seems to me that the dominion government was the proper authority to call that conference, and I suggest that some blame must attach to them because they did not take the initiative with respect to it.

As the hon. member for Comox-Alberni said, however, we are glad to have any step in a right direction; but if I may so suggest on behalf of our party, there are two steps in connection with this matter that still have to be taken.

I am not at all satisfied with the amount or with the age under the present system. I do not think they are satisfactory to the people of Canada. We should have had a reduction in the age limit of old age pensioners. I suggest that the government must also, in view of the situation that faces old age pensioners from the point of view of the cost of living, take into consideration something more in regard to the amount which thus far has been mentioned. In some of these matters the government has moved more quickly than in this, after the famous convention at Winnipeg.