

We all can recall instances of members of the House of Commons who sacrificed their own business interests to devote their time and attention to public affairs, and who were not fortunate enough to secure a position entitling them to some provision for their old age. When the turn of the wheel came for them, either through political defeat or voluntary retirement after long service, their financial position was so desperate that their friends had to come to their assistance. It is true that in many such cases, in recognition of the sterling quality of service rendered to the country friends have been glad to assist; but can anyone give me a logical reason why public servants of this character should not be eligible for participation in a general system of contributory old age pensions? I realize that the matter would have to be dealt with on a realistic basis, and that any worthwhile participation would probably have to depend upon long service. At any rate, I think there should be some provision whereby persons who have served the country long and faithfully as members of the House of Commons should be able to look forward to a reasonable measure of security for themselves and those dependent upon them.

I do not think any exception can be taken by my honourable friend's remarks on the desirability of increased educational facilities. Inevitably this subject revolves around the question of cost, and that brings it home to governments, for education, at least primary education, is in general the responsibility of governments. A point that always presents much difficulty is whether the home owner as such should be taxed more or less than other classes in the community for the support of education. I agree with my honourable friend that the problem is not an easy one. Whether or not it is desirable for the federal government to take a direct interest in this subject, which provincial governments have in the past zealously guarded as being within their own exclusive jurisdiction, I cannot say. I remember, though, that a few years ago when a considerable increase in moneys was made available from the federal treasury to the provinces, one of the strong arguments advanced as to the need for increased grants was the growing cost of activities within the peculiar sphere of the provinces. Whether or not the federal government may at some time have to contribute towards the payment of educational costs directly, or indirectly by increased grants to the provinces, is a matter that will have to be left to the future. With my honourable friend's general thesis I agree.

I also agree with his comments that unemployment is undesirable and increased export trade is desirable. The government is of the

opinion that a great deal of existing unemployment is seasonal, and indeed there is evidence already that on the west coast it has reached its peak and is lessening in volume. My honourable friend is quite right in his view that some of the unemployment is not seasonal, but arises directly or indirectly from the trade difficulties with which we are faced. But it is a source of wonder to me that up to this date, almost five years after the war, our unemployment has not been a good deal higher. When I think of the difficulties that appeared to face us at the conclusion of the war, as unstable economic conditions threatened most countries of the world and our immediate task was the transfer of a million or more of our people from war industries and three-quarters of a million from the forces back to peacetime activities, I marvel that for so long a time we have had so relatively little unemployment. Whatever the future may hold for us, it is inevitable that we shall have to face these problems in the light of all known circumstances and reckon with them in the most appropriate manner.

The honourable leader opposite said that Canada had now come pretty well to the end of her period of prosperity. I do not share this pessimistic view. A careful study of his speeches since the end of the war would disclose, I think, that he has periodically uttered such warnings. It is not reasonable to expect that our present unprecedented prosperity will continue indefinitely; I do think, however, that despite the dark clouds there is much reason for encouragement.

The honourable leader opposite suggested that one cause for concern was that Canadians have exhausted their savings. True, incomes have at times been stimulated by the return of taxes and by such items as payments from the Wheat Board to the grain growers. The honourable gentleman seemed to think that such incidents had some connection with the approach of the recent general election. I cannot agree with that deduction; rather, I would consider these incidents as coincidental with the election. On the question of personal savings, I would draw my friend's attention to the fact that one of the by-products of the war years was the habit of saving. The vast amounts of money saved by the Canadian people during that period were largely invested in government bonds, the sale of which was reflected in increased savings deposits. The continued increase in savings accounts in Canadian banks, and the reception accorded to the issues of savings bonds, indicate a continuance of the saving habit throughout the post-war period.

I would commend to honourable senators a recent publication by the Bureau of Statistics,