

It will be noted that the number of people eligible under their legislation had increased from 65,492 in 1910 to 90,892 in 1915, and there was paid out in pensions in 1915, £2,691,309. Now I will skip to the year 1926. In that year, under their legislation as amended from time to time, giving increases and bringing in the invalid and other classes, the number of persons had increased to 126,918, of which 48,803 were invalid and would not come in under the bill we have here; and they paid out in pensions in that year £8,146,636.

Mr. ARTHURS: That was purely a federal scheme?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Yes. I am quoting these figures merely to show to the House that as members we have certain responsibilities.

Mr. BENNETT: How much of that £8,000,000 was contributed?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I do not think any was contributed.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes, there was compulsory contribution.

Mr. EDWARDS (Frontenac): What was the age limit, male and female?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): It varies from sixty to seventy years, under certain conditions.

Mr. ARTHURS: Their scheme takes care of the blind too, does it not?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): There have been amendments from time to time, and that portion of the act which authorizes payment to women on attaining the age of sixty came into operation on December 15, 1910. But what I am trying to make plain to the House, Mr. Chairman, is that Australia has had experience with old age pensions from 1909 to 1927, and they have amended their legislation from time to time to meet conditions as they arose. We are embarking on a new proposal in this country. We know the difficulties that were encountered by the proposals that were made by the government last year, which are the present proposals, and why should we jeopardize them by attaching conditions at the present time? I believe that every member of this House is interested, and favourably interested, in this legislation, and is it not better for us first to establish the principle of old age pensions, and then proceed from time to time to perfect our legislation as our revenues and conditions will permit?

[Mr. J. H. King.]

I have no hesitation as a member of this House in saying that the Dominion parliament should not, under our constitution, pay the whole shot. I believe it is to the advantage of the people of Canada that this responsibility should be divided between the federal and provincial governments.

Mr. ESLING: During the campaign did the minister ever refer to the fact that the provinces were to contribute half the pension? Did he not stress the fact that it was the federal government that was bringing in old age pensions, and that he was the father of the legislation?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): What was said in the campaign, Mr. Chairman, might be of interest to my hon. friend, but if I were to review what was said in the campaign and the misrepresentations that were made by my hon. friend and his friends, it would not be helpful to this discussion at all, and I refrain because I am really interested in old age pensions and not in what happened during the campaign. It is of no importance at the present time what my hon. friend or I said during the campaign. I know that anything I said was within the bounds and confines of the bill, and I know that what my hon. friend said was outside the confines of the bill.

Mr. ESLING: What was that?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I am not going to be led away from the question before us by my hon. friend, further than to say that he represented that certain classes of women were ostracized under our legislation and would not benefit, when there was a special provision in the bill including them, and he knew it.

It is rather interesting to hear what our friends from Nova Scotia and other provinces have to say; in fact, we have heard members on the opposition side of the House say that the province of Quebec would not come in. The Solicitor General has already dealt with that, as a minister from the province of Quebec. I will say this for the province of Quebec: Through their organizations, family, church and otherwise, I believe they do take good care of their aged, and it might be that this proposal at first blush would not be acceptable to them. But in view of the history of old age pensions in practically every country in the civilized world to-day, is there any reason for supposing that any province in Canada will not come in?

Mr. ERNST: Is the minister aware that the chief Liberal organ in Nova Scotia, as I pointed out this afternoon, is opposed to the bill in its present form?