

Old Age Security

years. For the fiscal year 1946-47 the expenditure on federal account was \$45½ million; for 1949-50 the expenditure on federal account was \$94 million. When these figures are compared with those of comparable countries it will be seen that they represent a significant portion of expenditures on social security in one field, and are part of a significant contribution in the whole field of social security in terms of the total income or total expenditures of the nation.

7. Federal pension costs have increased in the last year alone by \$27 million, from \$66,764,285.03 in 1948-49 to \$94 million, estimated, in 1949-50.

8. Total expenditures, federal and provincial, are today running at the rate of \$135 million annually.

9. Since March, 1947, as a result of amendments introduced at that time, 77,000 new pensioners have been added to the rolls, a 35 per cent increase.

10. As a result of amendments made with respect to the blind in 1947, when the eligible age was reduced from forty to twenty-one years, the number of blind pensioners has increased from 7,311 in March, 1947, to 10,300 in March, 1950—an increase of 40 per cent in the three years following the 1947 amendments.

If one may say anything about the inadequacy, if that be argued, of the present measure, let no one fail to assess the very important contribution that has been made thus far, by the existing legislation and amendments, to the older people of our country.

I should, of course, add that a number of provinces have supplemented in varying degrees the statutory amounts provided to pensioners under the old age pensions legislation.

British Columbia leads the way in this by payment of a \$10 supplement, without means test, to all persons on old age pension in that province, making a total available pension of \$50 a month in British Columbia.

Mr. Low: The same is true of Alberta.

Mr. Martin: Alberta also pays a supplement of \$7.50 a month—

Mr. Low: \$10 a month.

Mr. Martin: —of \$7.50 a month—

Mr. Low: \$10 a month.

Mr. Martin: —to all its pensioners on a basis similar to British Columbia, making a total available pension of \$47.50 a month.

Mr. Low: May I interject at this point? I am sure the minister wants to have the

facts. The budget introduced by Mr. Manning early this week provided for an extra \$2.50 to the old age pensioners of Alberta, which brings the supplementary pension to \$10.

Mr. Martin: My hon. friend will see as I go along that I am not trying to draw invidious comparisons. When he hears my next remark I think he will be happy.

Saskatchewan pays a somewhat more modest supplement of \$2.50 a month—

Mr. Low: That does not make me happy.

Mr. Martin: —and even this is, of course, subject to a means test—not on the basis of regulations prepared by the federal government, but on means-test regulations of its own, and similar in principle to the means test applied in connection with the Old Age Pensions Act itself.

All three provinces provide, in addition to the cash supplements, fairly complete medical care and hospital service free of charge for their pensioners.

Ontario, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia, which formerly provided cash supplements prior to the increase in pension in May, 1949, have now discontinued these supplements; but Nova Scotia and Ontario provide a limited service in the field of medical care to their pensioners.

It will be apparent from the facts which I have recited that a great deal has been done, even within the framework of our present legislation, to improve the position of our aged citizens and to provide them with a measure of security equal to that which other countries provide for their older people.

The committee, I feel sure, will wish to study not only the facts of the present situation, but also the progress which has been made; and, in particular, it will no doubt wish to consider in the light of its study how our present program in Canada compares with schemes already in existence in other countries comparable to our own.

How does our program, for example, compare with that now in effect in the United States, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom?

In the United States a twofold system is now in operation. First, a contributory insurance scheme has been in existence since 1935. Employers and employees each contribute 1½ per cent of payroll to a special old age insurance fund. The federal government makes no contribution to that fund. From this fund are paid old age insurance benefits to insured persons sixty-five and over so long as they remain out of covered employ-