

this bill. That is the test of the government's sincerity in this matter. Let them go on and give the old people in any event the amount they are prepared to give if the provinces coöperate.

Mr. IRVINE: I would like to urge upon the Minister of Labour and the government the suggestion made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I really cannot see why we should be discussing a clause of this kind at all if, on the one hand, we cannot move to amend it in any way, and if the government refuses to accept any suggestions with regard to it. The Minister of Labour, under those circumstances, might just as well pass the bill in his own office and not bring it down here at all. In view of the very general agreement that the amount of the federal contribution should be increased, I would urge the Minister of Labour to allow the bill to stand until it can be redrafted in the light of the discussion that has taken place here both this afternoon and when the principle of the resolution was under discussion in committee. I hope that the government will see fit to increase the federal grant by twenty-five per cent.

Mr. ESLING: During the recent campaign I am quite sure that the Liberal speakers did not stress the fact that there would be relief for the aged provided only that the provinces agreed to the scheme. On the contrary, they all made it very clear that those over seventy were to receive a pension of \$240 a year. The father of the bill, the Minister of Health, for instance, did not get up in his district and say: We are going to give you an old age pension provided British Columbia comes in under this scheme. No. He simply told them: Our government is giving you an old age pension. When the government brought down this bill, it evidently expected, or hoped at all events, that all the provinces would come in. If the government did not have that expectation, we are justified in concluding that they did not want this measure to become operative. I would ask the Solicitor General or any of the ministers from the province of Quebec if they are quite sure that Quebec would be willing to bear its proportion of the expenditure, which amounts to \$3,069,000. Or take Ontario. Its proportion—I am taking these figures from the last census, which gives the number of people over seventy years of age—would be nearly five millions.

Mr. HEENAN: Does the census show that those people over seventy have not got an income of over \$125 a year?

Mr. ESLING: No, the census does not show the number of people who would come

[Mr. George Black.]

under the benefits of an old age pension scheme, but in 1924 there was a special committee appointed by this government to go into the whole question of old age pensions, and that committee reported back to the House that about forty per cent of the people in each province over the age of seventy would come under the benefits of this legislation. It is on that report that I am basing my figures.

Mr. BANCROFT: Do you know how the Conservative party voted in the House at that time on the report of that special committee?

Mr. ESLING: It does not make a particle of difference what happened in the past. If this government had to answer for all its sins in the past, I do not know where they would get off. Prince Edward Island would have to contribute \$256,000; Nova Scotia, \$1,188,000; New Brunswick, \$717,000; Quebec, \$3,069,000. I would ask the ministers from Quebec, are they confident that Quebec will come in under this scheme? If they are not, we shall have to come to the conclusion that they are not sincere when they say they want this bill to pass. Ontario's contribution would be \$4,904,000; Manitoba, \$500,000; Saskatchewan, \$500,000; Alberta, \$330,000; British Columbia, \$500,000.

Mr. VALLANCE: What are those provinces paying now?

Mr. ESLING: It does not make a particle of difference what they are paying now. We are discussing this particular scheme, and the government expects the provinces to come in and coöperate. The special committee that was appointed in 1924 not only discussed the advisability of bringing in an old age pension scheme in the Dominion, but it viewed the whole question from every phase, and considered similar legislation in force in other Dominions. That committee expressed the conviction that the only way to have a bill that would be uniformly acceptable would be to have the provinces coöperate. My opinion is that if you do not want the provinces to coöperate, then you do not want the bill to pass. The committee urged that there should be a conference of premiers to agree upon uniform legislation, and unless you agree upon such legislation you are simply postponing the day of the operation of the bill. Your own Prime Minister shares that view. On the receipt of this report he said:

It is all important that before any action be taken by the federal administration we should understand very fully and finally the attitude which the several provinces will take on this important question.