

In South Africa, the age is sixty-five.

In the U.S.S.R. men qualify at sixty and women at fifty-five. There is a still lower qualifying age for persons working underground or in unhealthy occupations.

In the United States the age in twelve states is sixty-five, and in fourteen states the age is seventy; in one state the age is sixty-eight.

In Czechoslovakia, both men and women are eligible at sixty-five.

In Denmark the age is sixty-five, but under certain conditions old age pensions are paid at sixty.

In Hungary, both men and women are eligible at sixty-five.

In New Zealand, men are eligible for old age pension at sixty-five and women at sixty.

In Poland, sixty-five for both men and women.

In Roumania, sixty for men and women, but the age is lower for underground workers.

The following countries have a lower age for women than for men.

In Austria, women qualify at the age of sixty, men at sixty-five.

In Belgium, women qualify at the age of sixty, men at sixty-five.

In the U.S.S.R., women qualify at fifty-five, and men at sixty.

In Australia, women qualify at the age of sixty, men at sixty-five.

In New Zealand, women qualify at the age of sixty, men at sixty-five.

One of the very first acts of the labour government of New Zealand when it came into office in 1935—

Mr. EDWARDS: Would the hon. member permit a question? Just what did he mean when he said that in Sweden the old age pension is "compulsory"? Does he mean that everyone, whether he requires it or not, is compelled to receive it?

Mr. MacINNIS: My understanding of the old age pension law in Sweden is that everyone contributes to the old age pension scheme; it is automatic and the pension is paid automatically when the prescribed age is reached. The pension is in various parts; there is a contributory pension, and if the contribution is not sufficient to make the pension such as to provide a decent living standard, the necessary amount is paid from the general fund by the government.

Mr. EDWARDS: The answer, then, is that everyone contributes?

Mr. MacINNIS: Everyone contributes. I believe that within certain limits the contribution is proportionate to income. There is a low limit and there is a higher figure.

I should like to read to the house from a statement made by the Minister of Pensions of New Zealand when he introduced the government old age pension scheme in the first session after the election of 1935. I quote this because the approach is so different from that usually made in this country. The quotation is from the New Zealand parliamentary debates—the New Zealand Hansard, I suppose—of September 1, 1936:

All social legislation, and especially that providing for pensions, is a recognition by the community of the fact that the recipients of the pension have in a very large measure been responsible for the development of the country and the vast accumulations within it. One of the points to be recognized is that such allowances made by the younger generation to their forebears are by no means a charity but in reality a recognition and a return to them of what they themselves have put into the nation. They have no reason to feel that they are placed under any obligation in respect of what they receive under this head. The pension is given to the old people as I have said as a recognition by the community to those who in the past have rendered service to their country as citizens.

Let me stress this: "They have no reason to feel that they are placed under any obligation in respect of what they receive under this head. The pension is given to these old people, as I have said, as a recognition by the community of the services they have rendered in the past to their country as citizens." In this country we already pension some of our citizens, in some cases possibly beyond the value of the services they have rendered. If we are to pension a few for the services they have rendered as citizens, why should we not pension all citizens for their services?

Continuing, Mr. Parry said:

That principle distinguishes the human animal from the animal kingdom. If we look at the home we do not find there that those children who are able to work say to the weaker or to the invalid members of the family that they are not entitled to the same food, clothing, and conveniences as those who are strong and capable. On the contrary all that is best is conceded to the invalid or the crippled member of the family. Of such a sentiment we are very proud. And if that is a good policy in the home it is equally good in the larger home—the nation.

Until we consider the nation as a larger home, a home where the weak are protected, not exploited, we shall not have a country of which we can truly say that it is civilized, because such protection is the hall-mark of civilization.

The Prime Minister, when he introduced the Old Age Pensions Act in 1925—at any rate