

My experience is that this is far from the truth and that there are many things which can be done in the health field and in many other fields which will help older people to maintain their independence, their participation in the effective functioning of society.

Therefore I hope my relative age will not be regarded by this distinguished group as presenting a handicap in giving this point of view to your committee.

I do not like to read a paper, but since you did not have an advance opportunity to go over this, I think I will at least skim through it.

Senator ROEBUCK: Read it.

Mr. ODELL: In his stimulating book entitled, "Looking Backward", written in 1889, Edward Bellamy was actually looking ahead to a new day for middle aged and older people when he quoted his host in the 20th Century as saying:

In place of the dreary hopelessness of the 19th Century, its profound pessimism as to the future of humanity, the animating idea of the present age is an enthusiastic conception of the opportunities of our earthly existence, and the unbounded possibilities of human nature... 'As eager boys in your day anticipated 21, so men nowadays look forward to 45. At 21 we become men but at 45 we renew youth. Middle age and what you have called old age are considered, rather than youth, the enviable time of life. Thanks to the better conditions of existence nowadays... old age approaches many years later and has an aspect far more benign than in past times. Persons of average constitution usually live to 85 or 90 and at 45 we are physically and mentally younger, I fancy, than you were at 35. It is a strange reflection that at 45 when we are just entering upon the most enjoyable period of life, you already begin to think of growing old and to look backward. With you it was the forenoon, with us it is the afternoon, which is the brighter half of life.'

There are parts of this prophecy, in fact most of it, which have not completely been fulfilled, but in thinking about what is in the future for older people, one cannot help but wonder at the progress we have already made in prolonging life in the first half of the 20th Century. It is now well known that the numbers and proportions of people 65 and over in the United States and Canada have quintupled in the past 60 years while the total population has only doubled. According to census and social security experts, there are now 18 million people 65 and over in the United States and by 1980 there will be 25 million. Canada has experienced comparable growth. In terms of numbers alone, these are phenomenal achievements in our two countries—modern miracles which have unfolded in the lifetimes of those now 65 and over. Yet we know, from our experience in other fields of endeavour, such as agricultural and industrial production, that these modern miracles have a way of creating new problems which require solution if we are to enjoy their full benefits.

Scientific farming and the mechanization of farming methods, for example, represents a miracle in productivity but creates a problem of surplus food and fiber which plagues both our countries on the national and international scene. Technological progress in manufacturing, today known as automation, creates similar challenges of adjustment in our methods of handling the problems of production planning, distribution, prices, wages and the like. Therefore, increased numbers of people, and particularly of older people, can be a blessing or a problem, depending on how well we do in the next generation in finding and implementing new social inventions to help people to live more fully throughout the added years of life. It is possible that in both Canada and the United States, our capacity to reproduce and prolong human life has out-