

*The Address—Mr. Hansell*

of the crumbs that fall from the taxpayers' table, but the right to an honourable and decent living because they are our Canadian sons and daughters. I believe that is only reasonable, and that it is not asking too much.

With respect to old age pensions, I believe that the age limit should be lowered to at least sixty-five. Personally I should like to see it lowered to sixty for aged women and at least to sixty-five for aged men. I believe the pension should be increased, especially now since the announcement made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) tonight with respect to the devaluation of our dollar. As far as I can see, the cost of living will naturally go up now because our people will not be able to buy as much for their depreciated dollar as they have in the past. What effect will that have upon the old age pensioner who must get along now anyway on what might be considered a pittance? I know that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) is sometimes inclined to strut around a little bit and to pat himself on the back because the allowable pension has been increased in the last little while and the old age pensioner is getting more now than he did in previous years. But I wonder if he is really getting any more. You cannot measure what he gets in cold hard figures of dollars and cents. The way to measure what he gets is by what his present pension will buy now compared with what it would buy some years ago when he did not get as much. If his pension at the present rate will not buy as much food and clothing, and as good housing, as it did when he was getting \$20 a month, then he is not getting as much today as he was getting then. That is the way to calculate whether or not the old age pensions have been increased.

There is sometimes some difficulty over the complicated way in which old age pensioners must prove their age. I am not going to be too hard on the administration in that respect, because I quite agree that, if the age is to be seventy, there should be some way for the applicant to be able to prove within reason that he has reached that age. But complications have arisen many times because a good many of our citizens who have reached the age of seventy cannot prove their age by virtue of its being registered somewhere in the vital statistics of this country. Seventy years ago mothers and fathers were not so particularly careful about whether the births of their children were registered or not. I am informed that some countries did not even register the birth of their infants seventy years ago, and sometimes it is difficult for people to find those certificates.

I know that the administration do not wish to cut anyone off. Those in charge of the

various pension boards throughout the country have no desire to deny a pension to an applicant if he is seventy years of age. But somehow or other there are a good many things they will not accept as proof of age when, to my mind, the proof is quite reasonable. I believe that some type of medical evidence could be given. There are other ways in which age could be proved.

May I now branch off to another subject, Mr. Speaker. We have been told that the present Liberal administration is anxious to build a trans-Canada highway. Personally, I have not been able to fully convince myself that the present administration is not playing with the problem. I do not see that there is any problem in building an all-Canada highway. I do not see that there is any problem about asking a provincial government if they desire a highway to go through their province. I do not see that there is any problem about asking a provincial government if they would like to accept several million dollars in order to improve a certain highway through their province. I have yet to be convinced that the government is serious about putting through an all-weather, all-year-round, paved highway from one end of this country to the other. I know that considerable pressure has been put on various governments, provincial and federal, to have highways go through this, that or the other route. When some delegations have waited upon the premier of Alberta they have said, "We should like the highway to go this way." There seem to be about three "main drags" through that province by which it could go. There is the one from Medicine Hat, down to Lethbridge, through the Crownsnest pass, Nelson, and on that way. I would have no objections if it went that way. Then there is the other route, through Medicine Hat to Calgary and through Banff and on through that way. I have no particular objection to that. Then there is the other route which concerns many people. That is the northern route by way of Saskatoon, Lloydminster, Edmonton, Jasper, Yellowhead and down that way.

**Mr. Cruickshank:** Is that below Vulcan?

**Mr. Hansell:** I will give my friend an answer to that. When this delegation appeared before Premier Manning, what did he say? He said, "I can answer yes as far as this province is concerned to any of the routes, because our objective is, as far as Alberta is concerned, to put three highways through."

**An hon. Member:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Hansell:** My hon. friend does not have to laugh at that. All he has to do is to go into Alberta now and he will find that two