

Mr. KING (Kootenay): This will relieve you of part of that burden.

Mr. CANTLEY: No. The minister must give us credit for sufficient intelligence to know what is best for ourselves. If the government will bring down a federal measure we will be glad to have it and I would suggest that the bill be remodelled in that direction. If the other provinces care to participate with the Federal government, regulations looking to that can easily be made, and thus the pensions paid to the people of those provinces could be increased.

There are one or two other points to which I would like to refer. In Ottawa last year was held a meeting of all the premiers of the different provinces to deal with an altogether different problem. Might I ask why the government did not consult these premiers at that time in regard to this matter? They were all here; the bill was before the House and had not then gone to the Senate. The government could then have found out the will of the several provinces through their premiers at that time. I am not going to deal with that any further, but I want to point out that this bill as brought down if enacted will prove an absolute injustice to some of the provinces. Take Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, for instance. Those provinces will, I take it, not be able to take advantage of this scheme, but would be taxed to provide old age pensions for men and women in other provinces that are better off than they are. It is a clear case of coercion—nothing short of it. Talk about maritime rights—how can you defend that? I ask the minister to be good enough to withdraw the bill, and remodel it to meet the objections that several hon. members have pointed out.

Mr. McLEAN (Melfort): It appears, Mr. Chairman, that a great many members are concerned over what the provinces may say and do about this measure, but they have not yet given the provinces an opportunity of saying what they intend to do about it.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Yes.

Mr. McLEAN (Melfort): They have been talking about what the premiers of the different provinces said, but they are not willing to wait and see what the legislatures of these provinces will do.

If I read this bill correctly, there is nothing in it to compel any province that wishes to come in under this scheme to pay ten dollars a month for every person over seventy years of age. I do not like to take up sections before we come to them, but section 9 provides that the maximum pension payable shall be

so much. It may be that some of the provinces would not desire to pay that maximum pension, and I submit to you, Sir, and to the House that it is better for the poor people in any province to get some help in the immediate future, rather than to have to wait for a long time until the provinces are able to give the maximum amount of assistance mentioned in this bill. When the federal government granted assistance to the provinces in the matter of building highways, they did not wait until all the provinces had agreed to all the terms of that legislation. They passed the measure and made the money available, and then left it to the provinces to come along and say: We are prepared to take advantage of this legislation, and we ask you now for a contract to enable us to spend the money. The principle is exactly the same. That policy depended on the provinces taking advantage of it, and it is so in this case. All that this legislation proposes to do is to assist the province in carrying some of its legitimate burdens. Some of the provinces may take advantage of it, and others may wait a while and see how the scheme works out, but sooner or later the people of each province concerned will have to decide whether to take advantage of it or not, and when the people of the province and their legislature have decided that point, they will then have to decide how much assistance they are going to take from this government on a fifty-fifty basis. I think these two points have been overlooked.

Furthermore, the old people throughout this Dominion are not going to thank their friends for the assistance they are given if that assistance is expressed in a form of delay that will exasperate and injure their prospects, rather than improve them.

Mr. BLACK (Yukon): The Minister of Labour, like all other hon. members who have spoken in favour of this bill, has expressed himself as earnestly desiring that the old people of Canada shall get the advantage of an old age pension as provided for by this legislation. Then why not accept the suggestion made by the hon. member for New Westminster a short time ago, and amend the bill so that the federal government will pay in any event fifty per cent of the maximum provided under this bill. Then if the province chooses to come in and add an additional amount to that pension, the old people of the Dominion will be just that much better off. But if the bill goes through as it is, and the province does not see fit to come in under its terms, the old people get nothing. I think the provinces would be more apt to come in if the government set the pace by paying fifty per cent of the amount provided for in