

the people, steps are not taken to make it possible for those in the lower income brackets to put that advice into practice. People in the upper income brackets suffering from arthritis will benefit by this education and the advice given, because they can take sea voyages; they can drink lemon juice; they can have all the milk they need; but a great many people are exposed to the education while they are left without the means of providing themselves and their families with the necessary diets to make it possible for them to avoid all these diseases.

If education is to be dispensed, I suggest that perhaps the minister might do well to turn his educational guns on the government, aiming it point-blank at them, and we shall sit back and sing, "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition." It is of the utmost importance that we tackle this problem of arthritis in the right way. Some people say that there are 600,000 persons suffering from it. I do not know what the number is, but I know a good many people are the victims of this disease. I know many of them myself, and in my opinion there should be something in these estimates dealing specifically with research into all forms of rheumatic disease associated with arthritis.

I have taken this opportunity to bring this question up to-night because I am afraid that the resolution on the order paper standing in the name of the hon. member for Peace River may never come up for discussion during this session, and I wanted the minister to have my views on the subject.

Mr. DANIEL: I wish to deal briefly with a matter that is of the greatest importance to a number of unfortunate people in this country. I refer to those who have lost their sight.

At the present time blind people over forty years of age secure a pension of \$25 a month, 75 per cent of which is paid by the dominion and 25 per cent by the province. They can earn an additional \$200 a year, without interfering with this pension.

In the entire Dominion of Canada, according to the dominion bureau of statistics, there are only 9,982 blind persons distributed across the nine provinces, there being 3,131 in Ontario and 3,152 in Quebec.

The council for the blind have requested approval of a six-point pension plan, which is as follows:

1. That a special act for the blind and prevention of blindness is desirable and should be enacted as soon as possible.

2. That pensions should be applied to blind persons after twenty-one years of age.

3. That pensions should be uniform, adequate and tied to the cost of living—at least \$30 a month, under dominion-provincial agreement.

4. That permissible earnings or income limits should be raised from the present level to the minimum income tax level, that is, \$660 single and \$1,200 for married blind pensioners.

5. That all blind persons possessing visual acuity of 3/60 Snellens chart or less shall be granted a guiding and special assistance allocation of \$10 a month.

6. That for persons who have entered Canada with good vision and who, through a serious illness or non-compensatable accident, have lost their sight, resident qualifications be reduced to five years.

Hon. members will see that the above plan is asking very little for each individual and a very small amount of money as far as the dominion government expenditures are concerned, to be distributed to this unfortunate group in the manner suggested.

At the present time blind pensions are not paid to anyone under forty years of age, which might be reasonable in the case of a lot of ordinary people, but members can realize that blind people from the ages of twenty-one to forty are just as much incapacitated and unable to work as those over forty. Consequently, I hope that the government will consider favourably and include in their estimates pensions for those between the ages of twenty and forty, the total of which in the whole Dominion of Canada is only 2,328.

It will also be noted from the six-point pension plan which I have read, that the blind ask permission to earn an amount equal to the minimum income tax level. This means that a single person, instead of being allowed to earn only \$500, can earn \$660 including pension, without affecting his pension.

The council of the blind are also asking for \$10 a month guiding fee for those with only a 3/60 Snellens test, which is a very reasonable amount. Hon. members can, I am sure, readily appreciate that the blind are asking for very little, and those hon. members who have had contact with the institute for the blind or the council of the blind, or blind people individually, know that they are probably the most cheerful group of all incapacitated persons. One only needs to have one's eyes bandaged up, as from an accident or operation, for a week to appreciate fully the handicap of being unable to see.

Blind people are spread across Canada and not in percentages in direct ratio to population. The highest percentage in Canada is in