

the Workmen's Compensation Act and mothers' allowances, but those measures afford absolutely no parallel to the measure before us at the present time. They are entirely provincial measures, and are not affected by any action of this House. But this is a case where we believe that the federal government should enact legislation to give assistance to the aged people in this country, and consequently the reference of the minister as to the similarity between this legislation and legislation in regard to mothers' allowances and workmen's compensation does not apply. I am going to ask the Minister of Labour or the government if they will be good enough to tell the House what objection they have to contributing seventy-five per cent towards the cost of this old age pension scheme.

Mr. PECK: I fully agree with the principle of this measure. The old people of this country who are unable to earn a living for themselves are entitled to full consideration from the people of this Dominion. The same principle applies, of course, to all people who are helpless and unable to make a living for themselves. We apply this principle in giving assistance to widows and children, and in the Workmen's Compensation Act, and particularly should we consider the old people who have served their country in one way and another and are now unable to support themselves. I am glad, therefore, to find that the House is so largely in accord with the principle of this bill.

I regret that the government should not have seen fit to contribute a larger sum than fifty per cent towards the operation of this measure. I am not prepared to quarrel with the view that perhaps it would be better to leave the administration of this scheme to the provinces, because that might lend itself to economy and greater care in the distribution of the money, and on that account perhaps some contribution should be made by the provinces; but for this parliament to offer to contribute only fifty per cent seems to me unreasonable. It would certainly not be sufficient to ensure that the provinces would adopt the necessary legislation to give effect to this principle we all accept. I fully agree with the hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. Heaps) that the federal government should contribute at least seventy-five per cent towards the cost of these pensions. I for one am not satisfied to see the bill go through in its present form, but if the House sees fit to pass it in its present form, I shall accept it, because I accept the principle. I would like to see the House left free to determine

whether or not we should contribute at least seventy-five per cent, and I think before this bill finally passes a resolution should be introduced dividing the House on that question, with a view to making the measure acceptable to the provinces. If the provinces cannot be persuaded to accept the contributions provided for here, and I do not think they can, the act is going to remain a dead letter, and the poor people of this country, of whom there are many in my constituency looking for relief in this direction, are going to be bitterly disappointed. I therefore trust that the government will see its way clear to increasing the amount substantially in order that the measure may become operative in all the provinces.

Mr. LADNER: In line with the suggestion that the federal contribution should be seventy-five per cent, I move, Mr. Chairman, and I do not think this is an infringement of the rules at all, that the words "three-quarters" be substituted for the words "one-half", in line 22. I make the point that this clause is simply giving authority to the Governor in Council to enter into an agreement. The government are not obliged to make the agreement; it is optional, and likewise they are not obliged to make an agreement providing for the proportion set out in this clause.

Mr. IRVINE: I do not know whether the hon. gentleman wants a seconder for his motion, but if he does, I shall be very glad to second it. I, of course, would rather see the Dominion government assume the whole responsibility, but if they will not do that, I would like to see them go as near as possible to it, with the sole object in view of making the act operative and ensuring its adoption in every province.

The argument of the hon. member for East Calgary as to what the provincial legislature had done was not a very convincing argument why this bill should not be altered. The argument he quoted was advanced in the provincial legislature, and if I were a member of that legislature, presumably I would be putting up the very same argument, but being here, where we have a chance of making the bill really operative, it is admissible to try and persuade the government to assume a greater share of financial responsibility. While it is true that as a rule it is better to have half a loaf than no bread, this is a case where the provinces may pay for the whole loaf and get no bread at all, for either this bill will increase the expenditure to the provinces, or it will compel the provinces to pay without receiving anything at all pro-