

Section 3.—The Dominion Government in Co-operation with the Provinces

Subsection 1.—Old Age Pensions and Pensions for the Blind

Legislation respecting old age pensions (R.S.C., 1927, c. 156) was adopted by the Dominion Parliament in 1927. Under this Act, the Dominion Government paid 50 p.c. of the net cost of all pensions paid under the Act. An amendment passed at the 1931 Session of Parliament (c. 42, Statutes of 1931) provided that the Dominion's share of the net cost of pensions be increased from 50 p.c. to 75 p.c. The Dominion contribution of 75 p.c. was made effective from Nov. 1, 1931; the provinces have since been reimbursed on this basis. By Orders in Council passed under the authority of the War Measures Act, the maximum pension has been increased from \$240 to \$300 a year and the maximum income (including pension) from \$365 to \$425 a year.

In the Speech from the Throne on Jan. 20, 1947, and in later statements in the House, the Government announced its intention to introduce amendments to the Old Age Pension Act designed to incorporate permanently into the Act provisions of the wartime Orders in Council referred to above and, in addition, to enlarge the scope of the Act by providing increases to the pensions payable and the income allowable to pensioners and by modifying certain of the eligibility requirements for pension.

In certain provinces old age pensions are augmented by a supplement paid for entirely by the province. In British Columbia the supplementary pension of \$5 monthly was increased, in light of the Federal Government's intention, to \$10 retroactive to Jan. 1, 1947. In Saskatchewan, the supplementary pension was increased from \$3 to \$5 at approximately the same time. Alberta continues to pay a \$5 monthly supplement. The supplementary allowance in Manitoba is an amount up to \$1.25 per month if the pension is less than \$21.25 monthly. In Ontario it is 15 p.c. of the pension based on a maximum pension of \$20 a month. At the discretion of the pension authority in Nova Scotia, a supplement of \$5 monthly may be given if the total income, including pension and supplement, does not exceed \$365 annually.

To qualify for an old pension, the applicant must, in addition to proving need, have reached the age of 70 years; he must be a British subject, and must have resided in Canada for the immediately preceding 20 years and in the province in which application is made for the preceding five years. The new regulations passed by Order in Council, May, 1947, liberalized the means test by providing for a more generous interpretation of income and property qualifications.

By an amendment to the Old Age Pensions Act in 1937, provision was made for the payment of pensions to blind persons over the age of 40 years. The maximum income (including pension) is higher in the case of a blind pensioner than for an old age pensioner. The maximum income in different cases is set forth in the Old Age Pensions Act. Amendments made under the War Measures Act apply to blind pensioners who also receive provincial supplements corresponding to those mentioned above for old age pensioners.

The Dominion Old Age Pensions Act is now operative in all provinces and in the Northwest Territories. In 1945 administration of the Act was transferred from the Department of Finance to the Department of National Health and Welfare.