

REMEMBER THE OLD FOLKS.

This is Mrs. Corbett; age 84, an old age pensioner. She was widowed two days before these scenes were filmed. But her neighbours will see that she is not alone (as are so many thousands of widows) for she is part of a community of old people at Peckham. She, and her friends are reading the papers which tell them that the Government hopes to increase their pensions: Four shilling more for single people, four and nine for an elderly couple. Even though they live in good, clean council flats, they have to count each penny carefully. The basic pension for them both at the moment is 54 shilling a week. It does not go far with prices as they are today. The National Assistance Board supplement the weekly pension which they receive from their local Post Office; but now some old folk fear the increased pension may reduce this assistance.

£1. 12. 6d. is the sum received by a pensioner. Food, of course, accounts for most of it. Those who live in the flats at Peckham are some of the most fortunate in the country, yet Mr. Byles, a printer by trade, still goes to work because he is able to earn a little more than their pension allowance. He says that otherwise he would be unable to make both ends meet.

Such is the plight of a married couple, but what of the single pensioner? From the 32/6 allowance, 21/6 is put aside for rent. This is an average week's food for a single person. It totals nearly forty shillings. Margarine instead of butter, no jam, no cakes, no fruit.

Now, with the four shillings increase, the position is slightly eased. This is four shillings worth of food. But food, rent, fuel and lighting are not all. The country will see the pensioners do not go without. They ask for more - and rightly. Many still live in loneliness forgotten, avoided, neglected - too often by their own families. They ask for something from each one of us - for a kind word or gesture. A sign to show they are wanted - perhaps a gift, or better still a visit to the single room that is their home: such small things are to them warm shafts of sunlight in the evening of their lives. We shall grow old as they have grown old. Inevitably it must come to each and every one of us. Before that time, we must strive to make their days as happy and as full as we would wish for ourselves.

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