HOW OLD AGE IS PROVIDED FOR IN THE U.S.S.R.

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In the Soviet Union all working people have the right to maintenance in old age. Every man who has reached the age of 60 and has worked for not less than 25 years, and every woman who has reached the age of 55 and has worked for not less than 20 years receives a pension irrespective of his or her capacity to work and earnings.

At the same time thousands of incapacitated workers and other employees receive disability pensions before reaching pension age. If disability is the result of injury sustained at work or an occupational disease a pension is granted irrespective of length of working service.
On reaching old age, people engaged in work underground or deleterious occupations are pensioned at 60 per cent of their last earnings; persons employed in heavy industry receive 55 per cent of their earnings, and those employed in light industry receive 50 per cent.

Certain increases are made according to the length of uninterrupted service at the same place of work. People employed in underground occupations and deleterious trades receive an extra 10 per cent for 3 to 5 years' service, 20 per cent for 5 to 10 years and 25 per cent for over 10 years.

Persons employed in the metallurgical industries, machine-building, electrical engineering, mining, the oil industry, the basic chemical and rubber industries, railway and water transport and industrial enterprises auxiliary to the post and telegraph service receive an increase of 10 per cent for 4 to 8 years' uninterrupted service at the same place of work, 15 per cent for 8 to 12 years and 20 per cent for over 12 years.

For all other workers and employees the
increase is fixed at 10 per cent for 5 to 10 years' uninterrupted service, 15 per cent for 10 to 15 years, and 20 per cent for over 15 years.

Persons who have grown old in the service of science are pensioned at higher rates.

Scientists in the institutes of higher education, who have worked for not less than 25 years, ten of them under Soviet rule, receive a life pension equal to the salary received in their last appointments.

Teachers and other educational workers, likewise agronomists, doctors and veterinarians, who have been practicing for not less than 25 years, receive service pensions amounting to 50 per cent of their earnings.

Legislation on old age insurance by the state was introduced at the very inception of the Soviet Government. Great developments in this field were made during the First and Second Five-Year Plan periods. Suffice it to say that in 1938 over 3,000,000,000 rubles of the state budget were assigned for social welfare.
But the state does not confine its provision for the old and incapacitated to pensions. The government also expends huge sums on various services for pensioners. It provides treatment in sanatoriums and health resorts, maintains homes for the incapacitated, provides them with artificial teeth and surgical appliances, finds suitable work for them, teaches them new trades and subsidizes their benefit societies.

A large number of palatial mansions, which formerly belonged to the royal family and the old nobility, have been put at the disposal of aged pensioners. The great palace built by Prince Kochubei in Tsarskoye Selo near Leningrad is now a nursing home for the old and incapacitated. Similar use has been made of the Shcherbatov estate in the Moscow Region, the Davydov estate in the Western Region, the Sheremetyev estates and the estates of many other counts and princes.

Many homes for the incapacitated have farms attached to them where the inmates engage in bee-keeping, poultry farming,
market-gardening and similar work on a voluntary basis.

In all these homes ample provision is made for entertainment and education. The inmates are well supplied with newspapers and periodicals, and are entertained with theatrical performances, moving pictures and concerts.

A large number of hospitals have been organized for incapacitated persons and the aged. There are special sanatoriums, notably at Sochi, the "Soviet Riviera" on the Black Sea Coast, at Kislovodsk, a world famous resort, at Yalta and other first-class resorts.

The Soviet Government has established a special system of cooperative enterprise under which aged or partially disabled persons can engage themselves in useful occupations in easy conditions. At the present time about 200,000 people are cooperating in this form of enterprise and in 1938 their gross turnover exceeded 3,000,000,000 rubles. The average wage in these cooperatives is 300 rubles per month, while tens of thou-
sands of incapacitated persons earn from 400 to 500 rubles a month.
In addition the old folks and invalids congenially occupied in these cooperatives have their own insurance societies which supplement the benefits they receive from the state.
In 1938 these societies spent about 58,000,000 rubles on services to their members. The sum of 15,700,000 rubles was spent on sanatorium and health resort treatment and rest homes alone and about 10,000,000 rubles on the welfare of the members' children.
In the U.S.S.R. the peasantry too are guaranteed security in old age as well as the urban population.
The average peasant lived a hard life before the Revolution. But old age was even worse. An old peasant was a burden to the family, an extra mouth to feed. When he died, it was a good riddance.
"Old age is a plague," says an old Russian proverb which is never heard nowadays. Collectivization has completely trans-
formed the life of the peasantry. The homeless peasant, the aged paupers and cripples begging from village to village are things of the past.

Collective farmers who are unable to work because of old age or physical disability are provided for by the benefit societies.

Under the Collective Farm Rules the collective farms contribute 2 per cent of the gross income to their mutual aid funds, thus creating large public funds for the maintenance of the aged and disabled. The functions of these societies are numerous and various. They organize and maintain rest homes and homes for aged collective farmers. In 1937 and 1938 alone about 150,000,000 rubles were spent for these purposes.

Take the old folks' home for peasants in the Petrovsky District, Orjonikidze Territory. This home, which accommodates 24 old peasants, has a substantial farm with a market garden, an orchard, cows, calves, horses, hogs, sheep, geese and other livestock. These old folks lack nothing.
Every citizen in the U.S.S.R. irrespective of age has the right to employment.

The shortness of the working day, the great expenditure on safety devices and on labor protection, the employment of modern machinery in industry and agriculture, the system of yearly vacations with pay and the fact that everyone feels that he is working for himself, has made work easier and congenial. That is why in many cases people well on in years and receiving pensions from the state sufficient for a serene old age, gladly continue to work at their jobs. They receive their pension in full as well as their wages.

"I am now 62 years old," says Fyodor Kostromin, a miner employed in the Donetz coal fields, "but I don't feel myself an old man yet, although the Soviet Government has put me on an old age pension—327 rubles a month. I am still working in the pit and draw 850-900 rubles. Some months I earn more than 1,000 rubles. The municipal bank has advanced me a ten-year loan of 3,000 rubles returnable by in-
stalments to build a house. Now I have a large, light, well-built house of my own."

Collective farmers, too, insist on working to a ripe old age when they could be resting at their ease. These old men and women are always ready to do some light work. They are held in great esteem. The old men are generally elected to the position of farm inspectors or other responsible offices.

Citizens who have grown old in the service of industry and science are admired and esteemed by all in our country.

In the words of the song:

"Youth has opportunity,
And age is honored everywhere."

Maintenance in old age is ensured by law embodied in the Constitution.

Article 120 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. declares:

"Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to maintenance in old age and also in case of sickness or loss of capacity to work. This right is ensured by the extensive development of social insurance of workers"
and employees at state expense, free medical service for the working people and the provision of a wide network of health resorts for the use of the working people."