

Family Allowances Act

the care of our senior citizens beyond the family circle, to take in the community and the whole nation. This program finds its purpose in the neighbourly instincts of an entire people and its fulfilment in their unselfish resolve to provide a better, more secure life for those who have grown old.

Every one of us can take pride in the fact that Canada is the first nation to pay a full scale universal old age pension without a means test. In looking at this whole picture of social security, of which a very important part is family allowances, may I say that family allowances and old age pensions help provide for the needs of the young and the old. But we have something else in addition in this nation, partly promoted by the federal administration, namely, our national health program.

Mr. Johnston: Where is that?

Mr. Macdonald (Edmonton East): That provides for better health care for everyone in Canada. Since the hon. member who has just interrupted me comes from Alberta—

Mr. Johnston: I did not say "what is it?" I said "where is it?"

Mr. Macdonald (Edmonton East):—I welcome his interruptions, and probably for his enlightenment I should tell him what the national health program means to the province of which he represents an important constituency in this chamber. Under the national health program, Mr. Speaker, more than \$3½ million was available to the province of Alberta last year to help provincial authorities increase our hospital accommodation and improve our general health services. This program of national health grants, established a little over four years ago, is without question the greatest single event in the health history of this country. Since the program began, more than \$11 million has been made available to improve health standards throughout Alberta.

Federal grants have been used for a thorough survey of the provinces' met and unmet health needs. The report of the health survey committee contains important recommendations regarding hospitals, nursing services, dental services, public health services, the care of crippled children, cancer control, mental illness, the control of tuberculosis, and many other matters vitally affecting the health of the people of the province of Alberta. Other federal health grants will be used to help implement these recommendations.

Moreover, I should like to tell the hon. member who interrupted me that for hospital

[Mr. Macdonald (Edmonton East).]

construction alone in the province of Alberta more than \$2 million in federal grants have been given to thirty-five individual hospital construction projects to help provide more than 2,000 additional hospital beds. Through the federal grants, additional training has been given to 400 physicians, nurses, social workers, psychiatrists and other health workers throughout Alberta. Grants have also been used to help establish Alberta's nursing aides school in Calgary where more than 700 nursing aides have already received training.

Substantial numbers of trained health personnel have been employed with the aid of federal funds to keep health services united throughout the province of Alberta. Other grants have been used to establish and operate new health units. In Calgary and Edmonton, federal grants have been used for the purchase of equipment and for the establishment of cerebral palsy clinics, well-baby clinics, and the development of immunization programs.

I would not have gone into this and other matters in such detail if the question had not been asked by the hon. member for Bow River as to what the federal government were doing with the money that they were collecting in taxes from Alberta. I say that through these and other responsible social measures, administered by the Department of National Health and Welfare and other federal agencies, effective steps are being taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the citizens of Alberta and of all Canada. I know that everyone will agree with me that each of these measures has been developed to meet a real need, but always within our capacity to afford.

Family allowances, old age pensions and the national health program are good in themselves, and I support them; but there is one thing that we should never forget, that our responsibilities as members elected from the constituencies are to give the kind of leadership that our constituents require from members attending sittings in this chamber. We should never forget that this social security program is built upon our system of free enterprise. The success of every social measure depends on the encouragement given to individual initiative because, in the long run, it is the hard work of the Canadian people, of whom I am one, that makes these measures for social security possible.

Just this week I had the opportunity and the privilege of being present when representations were made by representatives of the sightless people of Canada. They too have