

into this house I can wholeheartedly support the principle of a measure without any reservations whatever, if we all mean the things that we said when this bill was presented to the house. I am going to do my best to see that the provisions of this bill as set out here are implemented, and I shall work to the end that our unemployment insurance, our measures with respect to health and other social services that we have been discussing will be combined eventually in one general social security act applicable right across the country, whereby both the aged and the youth of this country may be guaranteed a full measure of social security. I am not concerned about the people in between. They can rustle for themselves; but I believe, as the Prime Minister rightly said, that we in this parliament have a supreme obligation to those who helped to build up this nation and are no longer able to take care of themselves, and also to those who are going to carry this nation forward into what we all hope will be a brighter future. It is our obligation to see that these young people are fitted for that duty.

Mr. R. T. GRAHAM (Swift Current): Mr. Speaker, I think we can all appreciate the very real satisfaction that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) felt in introducing this particular measure to the house. I think the pride that he exhibited in the provisions of this bill and in the purposes it would achieve springs from the fact that it is the fruition of almost his life's work and is something in which we can all join and which we can all thoroughly appreciate.

I agree with others who have said that this is one of the most important measures ever presented to any parliament in any country. So important do I consider it, that one of the reasons why I rise to speak is to put on the records of this house my own spoken support of the measure, and also to give me an opportunity of congratulating the government on formulating such a policy and bringing it down in the shape of the bill that is now under consideration.

When I noted the proper satisfaction and pride exhibited by the Prime Minister on this occasion, I could not help comparing it with another statement that was placed on the record quite recently by another member of this house, indicating the political successes that this particular party had achieved in the last few years. The period with which he was dealing was from 1940 down to the present. We all recall that that period coincides with the life of this parliament and with the four and a half years of this war in which we are all so much concerned. It struck me that that statement made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles)

was unfortunate. It was a matter in which I could not have joined with him in taking pride had he been speaking on behalf of my leader or on behalf of the party which I have the honour to support because, as I listened to him recite the political successes that had been achieved by his party during that period of terrible warfare, it seemed to me that he was giving to the house the war record of the party to which he belongs. And so I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is, to me at least, a matter of great pride, as I am sure it is to every member on this side of the house, that we have sat behind the Prime Minister with his record of achievement in the war effort and with his record of achievement in putting through social legislation which has finally reached its culmination in the introduction of this wide and comprehensive measure that we are now considering.

I do not know that there is much that I can add to the many excellent speeches which have already been made in support of this excellent bill, but there are one or two points that I should like to draw to the attention of the house. The underlying principle of the bill, the keynote of the measure, is equality of opportunity. To me that is essentially a principle of true Liberalism. Personally I have almost a horror of paternalism because I believe it destroys the fibre of the people to whom it is applied. But under this measure we in no way disturb the parental authority, the parental control or the parental direction of the lives and well-being of the children. In other words, the basic principle of this bill is to help parents to perform a very important task. It is to help them to help themselves.

These family allowances, as has been pointed out, go to those in the income classes who need it most, to those who are not in receipt of sufficient income to pay any income tax, and to those whose income is on the margin where the income tax payable is very small.

I happen to come from an agricultural constituency, and naturally I considered this bill in the light of its effects upon those engaged in farming. The results will, I believe, be wholly beneficial to those engaged in agriculture. One-half of the children of Canada live upon farms, and it seems to me, therefore, to follow that the farmers will benefit largely as a class from the provisions of this measure for the well-being of the children of the nation. I think it will be of particular advantage in the area from which I come in southwestern Saskatchewan, a district that all too frequently is visited by drought or other natural disasters which bring almost untold hardships to the farmers in that area. My memory easily recalls the period of the great drought centring in 1937. One of the things that I remember