

The Budget—Mr. Martin

face of these figures—that the proposals we made in the field of health, with the exception of health insurance—

Mr. Fleming: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin:—have been implemented to levels greater than those proposed to the provinces in 1945. In fact the health grants are now two or three times more generous than those proposed in 1945. I can say as the premier of Saskatchewan said last week, although he was not fully satisfied from the point of view of the future direction of the plan envisaged by him, that the health grants which were proposed in 1945 and which have been implemented and increased as I have just indicated have more than justified their existence and are providing for a measure of uniformity in health services throughout the country such as to make every Canadian proud of what we are doing at the present time.

My hon. friend will recall that in 1945 a planning grant was proposed. This planning grant would enable every province to select its own personnel for the purpose of making a complete survey of its health services. This was one of the proposals made in 1945. Have we unilaterally implemented that proposal, Mr. Speaker? The answer is yes. On my desk in my department are 10 huge volumes representing the 10 provincial surveys that have been made under the planning grant, as a result of which today every province is in a first-rate position to assess the extent of its health assets and liabilities and needs. Again, in this particular aspect we have unilaterally implemented a proposal made to the provinces in 1945.

One of the things we have not done has been to carry out the full development of our physical fitness program. I must accept some of the responsibility for that. We have abandoned this program. The house will remember that we abandoned it as the result of a suggestion made by the hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre (Mr. Thatcher), vigorously supported by the Leader of the Opposition. The whole house agreed with the decision that it should be abandoned.

Then we come to the field of social security, and perhaps here we have even stronger evidence of the fact that the government has, almost to the fullest extent, implemented the proposals made in 1945. At that time the government proposed a universal old age pension system under which the federal government was prepared to assume full responsibility for administration and for the raising of the necessary taxes to provide pensions to everyone, without a means test, at 70. This was in 1945, before Korea, and

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at a time when our defence budget was expected to be stabilized at approximately \$250 million. Since that time war came to Korea, and with Korea increasing obligations in various parts of the world including our contribution to NATO. The result has been that the Minister of Finance is now budgeting for almost \$2 billion for national defence alone.

In spite of that, we unilaterally implemented our proposals for old age security made in 1945, and today every citizen in this country who is an applicant and who is aged 70 is given a non-means-test old age security cheque at a total cost to the Canadian taxpayers this year of \$367 million. Again this was done on the recommendation of this government and parliament. Does the Leader of the Opposition say that does not represent the implementation of a very important proposal made by the federal government in 1945?

We will not stop there. In 1945 old age assistance was proposed as well. A scheme of old age assistance was proposed to the provinces, including Ontario, the premier of which at that time was my hon. friend, to care for those between the ages of 65 and 69, on an equal basis with the provinces. Surely it is not news to the Leader of the Opposition that that proposal has been implemented, that it is now the law of the land and is on the statute books of this country. The result is that we are providing old age assistance on a 50-50 basis with the provinces. In 1945 the proposals set the amount at \$30 per month. We have gone one better, because we are paying old age assistance now in the amount of \$40 per month.

Mr. Fleming: You mean 50 per cent, do you not?

Mr. Martin: In 1945 we proposed—

Mr. Fleming: Surely the minister is not suggesting that the federal government is paying all that.

Mr. Martin: I did not suggest that.

Mr. Fleming: You said, "We are paying".

Mr. Martin: I said the federal government had recommended a policy, as a result of which the Canadian taxpayer was making contributions for the maintenance of those classes in our communities which we, as a government and as a parliament, believed desirable. That is what I said.

Mr. Fleming: You said, "We are paying".

Mr. Pickersgill: "We" is plural.

Mr. Martin: Now let us go to the question of blindness allowances. There was a proposal for blindness allowances in 1945. Not