

Family Allowances

Mr. COLDWELL: I should like to say just a word. When I saw the vote this afternoon I wondered just why this parliament had waited such a long time to pass a measure of this description. This afternoon the Prime Minister quoted speeches he made thirty-three years ago and referred to his book "Industry and Humanity," which I had the pleasure of reading a good many years ago. The Prime Minister has been in office for most of twenty-five years and at the end of that time we find a House of Commons unanimously in favour of this great social measure—for I so regard it. That is a satisfaction to everybody. But one wonders why such a measure has been delayed for so long. I look back over the last few years, as I said the other day, and I think of the misery of the ten years between 1929 and 1939. The Prime Minister this afternoon referred to his visits to people in 1911, when I was pretty young. I was glad to note what the Prime Minister said about those people at that time. But let me say to him that I only wish that in the last ten years he might have visited some of the homes in his own constituency. There he would have seen indescribable conditions. I remember being up in that constituency in 1934 and seeing little children with their feet bound up in gunny-sacking because there was no money to buy boots and shoes so that they could attend school or engage in other normal activities. I say this to him too, that I am quite sure that irrespective of what the outcome of the next federal election may be, there is no party in this house which would dare to do anything but implement this piece of legislation. We shall have to extend our social service measures. It is estimated that this measure will cost the country in the neighbourhood of \$200,000,000 annually. We have also a health plan which will cost possibly another \$200,000,000 annually. We have men and women returning from overseas incapacitated and from other causes, and I hope eventually—I hope, I say—that we shall be spending several hundred millions of dollars to do the right thing by these men and women.

But what I want to point out now is that somehow we have to find the ways and means of providing the necessary revenues for these purposes. My hon. friends to my left a few moments ago spoke of the national dividend. I believe that a national dividend will come when we are able to control the productive resources and the national resources of this country in the public interest. I do not think

you can issue national dividends unless they can be transferred into property over which the nation has some financial control.

I believe that this measure which we have adopted unanimously this afternoon is going to force this country along the road towards a new social order which the Prime Minister perhaps did not exactly imply this afternoon, but which is undoubtedly in the making, a new order in which the productive and natural resources of the nation will be operated in the public interest for the benefit not of a few but of the whole people of this country. We are on the threshold of tremendous changes, and we have to prepare the economic base for these social security measures.

If I have one criticism then to make of what the government has proposed and the house supported unanimously this afternoon—and I am glad that it has been unanimous—it is this: we are building the superstructure without providing the necessary foundation. After all, the necessary foundation is the goods which will validate the allowances that are now being provided for. We have reached an age of abundance, but that age of abundance cannot be taken advantage of by the people until the means of production and distribution are in the hands of the people of Canada. The people of Canada themselves hold the key to unlock the closed door.

I am glad that all this has happened this afternoon. We, as the Prime Minister said, have taken a little credit for promoting across this country many of these social measures. We still repeat that we have done a great deal along these lines. I remember a trip that I made to Great Britain in 1924. When I returned I happened to be a political candidate in the city where I lived. At that time I was actively urging old age pensions and unemployment insurance, those two great social measures which we now have on our statute books. I remember very well how my opponents, both Liberal and Conservatives, came back with the statement that I had been over to Great Britain and Europe and copied their ideas and that in this country we did not want to import the dole. I have a vivid recollection of that campaign and of what was said about those two social measures at that time.

This morning in my office upstairs I opened a letter which came from an old pupil of mine, the son of a former Liberal member of one of our legislatures in this country. That boy is now serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force in India. I have not his letter before me but I can quote pretty well what he said. He said: "I spent four years in