

Family Allowances Act

National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin). But in many cases the children are forced to quit school immediately upon reaching the age of 16 because the family income just does not allow them to go on.

As for the hon. member who has just taken his seat, and his saying that it was something unheard of when the federal government proposed this particular piece of legislation, I am not going to say too much except that it is an application of the dividend that has been advocated by the Social Credit members of this house since 1935. It does not go as far as we should like to see it go. The money does not come from the same place that we should like to see it come from. Nevertheless, we dislike the idea of the government's getting the credit for adopting something that we have been advocating for years.

Mr. A. F. Macdonald (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I would have had little to say on this resolution had it not been for the contribution of the sponsor of it and that of the hon. member who has just spoken, namely, the hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Thomas). Some months ago, being intensely interested in the over-all picture of social security, particularly as it applied in the province of Alberta, I took the time to examine and to inquire with regard to family allowances and other social security measures such as health care and pensions for the aged. I learned that every month there flows into the province of Alberta an amount of \$1,800,000. This amount goes into 140 thousand homes and provides a better opportunity for more than 300,000 children in that province. We all know that this means that the mothers and fathers in the province of Alberta have each year \$21 million extra to spend on the care of their children. All of this \$21 million is paid out of the federal treasury. It is paid entirely by the dominion government.

Mr. Johnston: Where do they get the money from?

Mr. Macdonald (Edmonton East): It can only come out of the pockets of the taxpayers; it can come only out of the taxpayers who work hard to put it into their pockets.

Mr. Johnston: It comes out of the people of Alberta in taxes. Why does the hon. member not say it plainly?

Mr. Macdonald (Edmonton East): Because of these allowances, the children are able to get better food than they ever before had, and certainly more than they received eight years previously, before this good social measure was adopted. They are able to get better medical, dental and optical care than

they ever before received. In every part of Alberta, as in every part of Canada, because of the allowances there has been a great improvement in school attendance. In fact, someone has said that family allowances are Canada's best truant officer. Because of family allowances, thousands of our children are now able to get the equipment they need in order to take part in sports and other recreational and cultural activities. These opportunities were not always open to them before the introduction of family allowances. By helping to relieve the fear of want that presses on every home where family incomes fall short of family needs, family allowances have given new hope and new faith in the future to a great many thousands of the parents of these 300,000 children who were recipients of family allowances in Alberta last year.

I have heard some suggest that the introduction of family allowances was a dangerous thing. Those people had little faith in the integrity and the sense of responsibility of the mothers and the fathers of this nation. After eight years' experience with this program we all know that the federal government's trust in the parents of this country was well placed. Experience has clearly shown that, in every part of the country, the allowances are being spent wisely and well to provide better food, clothing, health care and education for our nation's future citizens.

However, in the discussion of family allowances I believe that we are being insular when we think that it is the one form of social security to which the people expect us to give particular consideration. Family allowances are good, but there are other matters that we must consider. In 1951 the federal government enacted a vast new program of old age security. That program, in the generosity of its provisions and in the breadth of its coverage, is unequalled anywhere else in the world. Under our federal old age security program no less than 37,250—and I am speaking of Alberta citizens only—receive more than \$1,500,000 every month, which is paid entirely—every last cent of it—by the federal government, and without a means test of any kind.

Mr. Johnston: Out of the taxes of Alberta.

Mr. Macdonald (Edmonton East): Federal expenditures on old age security alone in Alberta amount to something more than \$18 million a year, and this is in addition to the federal share of the old age assistance payments to those in need between the ages of 65 and 69. Through this self-respecting pay-as-you-go pension program the federal government has extended responsibility for