

what he knows he can assume himself, undermines our basis of family responsibility. Because the system thus undermines the fundamental responsibilities of the head of the family for the maintenance of its members, it seems to me that it should be opposed as subversive of one of the principles of the organization of society on which western civilization has striven to insist for centuries.

It is not the part of the State to assume itself the maintenance obligations, which its laws impose upon parents; it is rather the duty of the state to see that the distribution of wealth, and the conditions of labour, housing, etc., within the State are such that it is possible for parents to discharge their legal obligations to their children.

#### FAMILY ALLOWANCES—THE STATE'S ADMISSION OF HELPLESSNESS

Family allowances are an admission by the State that the wages within its areas are not and cannot be made sufficient to support the average family according to minimum standards of health and decency, and that therefore the State must, by subsidy, redistribute resources, the equitable development and distribution of which it cannot control. That conditions in Canada have reached this hopeless plight over any broad area, or industrial group, I cannot admit, nor can I admit that where such conditions do prevail that they are either hopeless or irremediable beyond the power of labour organizations and governments to affect. I do not think that it is necessary for Canadians to-day to proclaim to the world, that a decent living at a decent minimum standard of life is such an impossibility for any proportion of her people that the state must intervene to pay allowances whereby life can be sustained at a decent level. The remarkable progress recorded in the last quarter century in this land, in the establishment of decent wages and hours gives every hope, I believe, that the day will yet be reached, in this Dominion when by insistence upon a decent minimum wage, the better organization of employment, over seasonal slacks and cycles of economic depression, and the economic regulation of immigration, it will be possible to prove every labourer worthy of his hire. In Canada to-day labour is rewarded over broad groups of occupations, by a fair wage, based on the sound principle of equal pay for equal work, and the indisputable economic premise of reward on the basis of power of production, not of reproduction, as the allowances system advocates. The extension of such conditions to universal application is the soundest line of progress.

#### FAMILY ALLOWANCES—APPLICABLE IN TWO TYPES OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Since this system is an admission that the wages cannot be made adequate for a decent standard of life, it would appear that in only two sets of circumstances would the payment of allowances seem at all justifiable. In the first place, the system might be argued for an industry or country, where the standard of wages payable is so deplorably and inevitably low, because of extraneous circumstances, that admittedly wages cannot be paid at a rate that will meet at all, the conditions and needs of life. Such circumstances might be fairly said to exist throughout many of the collieries of England and the mining and metallurgical industries of most continental countries. Conditions are such that labour cannot be employed throughout the industry continuously, or periodically at such rates, as will permit a decent minimum standard of life. Under these circumstances the whole industry must organize itself to provide an equitable subsidy, where necessary, spread over the whole industry, whereby the industry can continue and its product be marketed at such costs and under such conditions, as will assure its survival in the face of competition. If the industry, itself, is in such condition, that it cannot by co-operative action, sustain such subsidies, or if they are used further to depress standards, then the

[Miss Charlotte Whitton.]