

that they may arrive at complete manhood and womanhood in the full possession of health and strength.

It is something for which I have been thankful ever since I came to this house that we have at the head of this administration a man who felt as our Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) does, about the poor of this land. If as many things as we should like to see done for the poor have not been accomplished, I am sure it was not his fault, and to-day I rejoice in this measure and am thankful that he heads this administration, because in a great measure he is responsible for bringing it in at this particular time. I deplore the attitude of those who ask, why the haste? I would say on the contrary, why has there been a delay? I cannot understand the members of the Progressive Conservative party asking, why the haste? I am glad that the measure has now been brought in. I am happy that it is being done now, and I express my humble and deep appreciation of this administration in acknowledging this achievement. I am glad they did not listen to any quibbles about constitutional obstacles.

I remember very well when the same arguments were advanced in connection with old age pensions, that we had not the constitutional power to do such things. If our present leader had not decided to go ahead with the old age pension legislation, regardless of such arguments about jurisdictional problems—and such arguments were advanced then, just as they are being advanced now in connection with this proposed measure—I suppose we would never have had old age pensions to-day. Many times as I talk to old people to-day and see how much better their last days have been because of the old age pension they receive from month to month, I have thanked God that the Prime Minister felt as he does toward the poor of this country, so that he saw to it that the evening of their lives was made happier and more comfortable by reason of old age pensions, and that he had not listened to quibbles and arguments that we had not the constitutional power. I remember it was argued at that time that that legislation might be declared *ultra vires*, just as it is said that the legislation before us at the moment will be ruled *ultra vires*. But I have not seen any province object to it, nor have I seen it ruled *ultra vires*; and certainly if the grant made in connection with old age pensions is not *ultra vires*, and no attempt has been made to declare it *ultra vires*, there is even less likelihood of this measure being so ruled.

There is another suggestion, why take up this particular bit of legislation? There are many other problems, it is said. Well, I do

not think much attention should be paid to that argument. You cannot make a better beginning than to make sure that the children of the country are well looked after through a minimum measure of well-being. Surely it is not suggested that we should not do anything until we are able to do everything. You have to start somewhere. We have looked after unemployment insurance and old age pensions, and now we are starting to look after the minimum standard of well-being for the children of the nation. In my opinion that is the greatest measure for the good of the nation in the days that lie ahead, greater than any other measure that has been introduced into this parliament since confederation.

I commend the speech of the leader of the government when he introduced the bill, pointing out how an investment in the health of our children, in the food, clothing, shelter, medical attention and so on which they require, would bear rich dividends in the days that lie ahead. Thinking back over the period of depression in Saskatchewan and of some of my neighbours, some of the casual labouring people who were trying to bring up families of five and six, and knowing, as we all do in a small town, pretty intimately the circumstances of everybody, I knew the income of some of those people, and I often wondered how in the world they managed to clothe and feed their children and send them to school as well as they were doing. Some of those children were brought up on incomes which I am sure hon. members would regard as impossible; nevertheless they went to school and did well, and they have gone into the world and become good citizens. Many of them, as I have said, are in the armed forces and some have already been decorated in this war.

When I hear people who are highly placed, enjoying good incomes, saying that we dare not trust such people with the money because they will not use it to help their children, that it will not be properly applied, I should like to have some of these members see what was accomplished by some of those neighbours of mine with the little amount they had from year to year. I know of families during those depression years, the families of returned soldiers who were getting very small pensions, some of them having to live on the war veterans' allowance, which was around \$40 a month, and some of the heads of those families could not get other work and had to subsist on that allowance of \$40 a month. I have known a family where that was practically the only income for several years and they had five children. Somehow or another,