

Supply—Health and Welfare

to or from school." That might be ascertainable. "Show the cost of clothing bought since admission." Most of them do not keep any accounts under their birch bark book-keeping system, and there would not be much you could find out about that. Then the next question, "Show details as to dental, medical, optical costs since admission." If that work was done at the school they would have those details. Then, "Books, toys, etc. purchased since admission". If there were any provided they would probably know what they were.

These questions are asked of the priest at the mission. These people bring them in to the priest, because they cannot read or write. I asked Mr. Allen what was the point in asking that kind of question, because the only point in asking a question is to get an accurate answer. If you cannot get an accurate answer there is no use in asking a question. That is what this lady was perturbed about when she said:

Darlene was admitted at Holy Family school at Ile a la Crosse in September, 1953, and has now been back with me for the summer holidays.

Then she goes through her whole family giving the details of where the children are. She gives that information because she has not had any family allowance cheques for several months.

I dropped in at Buffalo Narrows during Easter. There are many white people there, some of them not too well educated but sufficiently so to answer letters. One of them has 12 children, six of them being at home as they are under school age. His wife told me that they were getting \$20 a month in allowances. Another man had five children, with three of them at the Ile a la Crosse school and two at home. It just happens that I saw a letter from this man in the files of Father Gagnon when I dropped in at Ile de la Crosse, and it was a pathetic thing. He was saying how sorry he was that he could not bring the children home at Christmas time because he had caught only 27 boxes of fish since October, and his mink would not be ready for sale for some time. He had sent \$3 so that each child would have a dollar at Christmas, and he said he would try to bring them home the next Christmas.

These are the kind of people we are shutting out. I think some consideration should be given to removing this means test and seeing that these people are paid. I do not care whether it is in Ethiopia or wherever else you may find underprivileged children, they are no more underprivileged than the people in this area. If any hon. member is interested I would be glad to have him come with me

[Mr. Harrison.]

to visit those people. If he finds that conditions are not as I have stated I will be ready to apologize for anything I have said tonight. These people are at the absolute bottom of the Canadian economic scale. The minister's department is trying to improve the health of these people, and I think the results are indicated by the increase in population, but this work should be co-ordinated with family allowances.

I have no doubt that the minister will tell me what he told Bishop Dumouchel, that education is a provincial problem. I should like to quote from Bishop Dumouchel's last letter, where he says:

Mr. Martin comes back with the argument that education is the sole responsibility of the provincial government. This we all know and state that the provincial department takes up this responsibility quite adequately. Teachers' salaries, school supplies and tuition grants are top. But what Mr. Martin overlooks is that the organization at Ile a la Crosse is not a school but a residence which makes it possible for the children to attend school there.

In concluding it might be well to indicate what some of the officials in the department think as to the coverage of the act in this respect. I quote from a letter written by George Carty, executive assistant to the minister, as follows:

However, I now find that section 18 (c) presupposes that the basic maintenance required by the act is satisfactorily met. In other words, before any special arrangements can be made for the disposition of the allowance cheque, the basic conditions of eligibility must be complied with.

Then on the next page the basis of eligibility is set out as follows:

That is to say the parent must pay to the school basic maintenance of \$5 a month plus the family allowances received on behalf of the particular child concerned.

I can assure you that that cannot be done in that area because these people have not got it. In other words they would have to pay \$5 a month plus the family allowance cheque for each particular child. That was the approach taken by the officials of the department in the absence last year of the minister when he was doing such an admirable job in foreign relations in New York. I can assure him that his own work up in this area suffered because we could not get a statement of policy on this matter from his officials. They took the proposition up with the provincial administration, to see if they would increase the allowances at that end, and came to the conclusion that the proposition would be met and these objections in the act overcome if the provincial grant, instead of being given to the school, was given to the individuals themselves, and they in turn would bring it back to the school, and that would satisfy the act.