

The hon. member for North Battleford made some reference to her personal experience during those years. At that time I was in one of the pioneer communities of Canada. I cannot think of any government in any country of the world which was more heartless than the Conservative administrations both provincially and federally during that period of time.

I received a call a few days ago from one of my constituents who has just returned after spending nearly four years overseas. This man was a veteran of the last war, having spent two years in the armed services before he was nineteen. He was unfortunate enough to have to live in northern Saskatchewan and to have to seek help through the Conservative government. The very best he could get was \$5 a month for himself and wife, and an extra dollar for his child. Those were the family allowances available in Saskatchewan during that period of time—a dollar a month per child, with \$5 for the parents. If there were five children in the family they might look forward to receiving \$10 a month, which was the maximum relief allowance in the bush.

I recall looking into the case of a widow with four children. I discussed this matter with the Conservative minister of agriculture of Saskatchewan, who happened to be our local representative at the time. It was this family's misfortune to have lost the father, as a result of impaired health, following a most distinguished career overseas with the Canadian army. He left this small family of four children, two of whom were twins. The mother was English and was not familiar with the problems confronting the pioneer in the north. That family found a home in our community. Their income was slashed from \$35 to \$24 a month. I remember the figures vividly, because they represented a slash of over thirty per cent.

About that time the provincial treasurer was replaced on orders from Ottawa, because apparently he was too generous with the people's money. Another provincial treasurer took over the strong-box, in order that the money might be spent cautiously. Hon. members will understand that a widow who has to buy everything she eats and all she wears must be even more skilful than the Minister of Finance, if she is to manage a family of five on \$24 a month.

I have in mind another case. These people went into the northern country in 1919. The father had served during the Boer war, and again in the great war. His wife looked after the family while he was overseas. When they first went in there they were about fifty-eight miles away from the railway. They managed

to give their children a good education, but it was a very hard and long pull. The government of the day gave assistance in that community on the basis I have indicated, but could not see that adequate health and educational services were required. There were those at the time who felt that frontier people did not deserve any more. I should like to remind the committee that the people in those pioneering communities have made a wonderful contribution to the life of this country. Young people from those communities have joined the services.

The family I mentioned that went back fifty-eight miles has had a most unusual record. As I said, the father was a veteran of the Boer war, a veteran of the great war, and joined the veterans' guard of this war. They educated four children. The eldest boy joined the air force before the war started. The younger boy joined since and has been invalidated home. Unfortunately the older boy will never return again. The mother, who is also a grandmother, joined the C.W.A.C. and is making an outstanding contribution during the present conflict. I had the pleasure of introducing her to the Minister of National Defence when she was last in Ottawa. Surely such people deserve better than we gave them in the thirties.

I think the Prime Minister is to be commended for introducing legislation of this kind on the assumption that people such as I have mentioned are just as important as people on St. James street, Montreal, or on Bay street, Toronto. When citizens in a community, whether it be Hudson Bay Junction or in the Peace River country, are obliged to live under conditions where \$5 a month for the family is the maximum amount available, it is a reflection upon the entire country. I do not feel that the Prime Minister was on strong ground when he intimated that he did not have public sentiment with him previously. I think there have been many occasions during the past twenty-five years when public sentiment would have been with the government had legislation of this kind been proposed.

Mr. MARTIN: Is the hon. member aware that in 1929 a motion was moved in this house by Mr. Letellier, seconded by the former leader of the present C.C.F., Mr. Woodsworth, proposing that the question of family allowances be referred for committee consideration, and the whole question was referred to the committee on industrial and international relations? That committee, of which Mr. Woodsworth was a devoted member, decided to do nothing about the matter. I just mention that as an indication of the sort of thing the Prime Minister had in mind.