

Family Allowances Act

goods and services to increase the standard of living of these people who are in dire need, then there should be no question as to whether or not they will get it. It should be forthcoming.

From the agricultural point of view and the industrial standpoint, this country is richer by far than it ever has been. In fact we have come to the point where our agricultural production is increasing so rapidly that the farmers are saying we shall have to control production because we have not an export market. Those people who speak that way, and those people who say that we cannot afford family allowances are forgetting that when you export you must import, unless you want to give the goods away. When you import goods you must make provision for consumption in this country. The only way you can do that is by increasing our standard of living. Accordingly, it would seem that the best market for everything we can produce, either in the primary or secondary industries, lies right in Canada. We can help ourselves by helping those people to get an increase in family allowances.

Can we afford it? Last year our production was close to \$22 billion. Just before Christmas the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) stated that this country was more prosperous than it had ever been before.

Mr. Dupuis: True.

Mr. Johnston: Then why do we refuse to give a little bit more in family allowances?

Mr. Dupuis: We do not mind allowing a little more if we can afford to give it.

Mr. Johnston: I have just been trying to tell you that we can afford it.

Mr. Dupuis: This is just election talk.

Mr. Johnston: That has been the trend of Liberal thinking, that we have not enough dollars. It is not a case of whether we can produce the goods and services. It is time we got out of that line of thinking, and then we would not have these poor indigents coming up here and asking for a loaf of bread. We have members of the government standing up and saying that we cannot afford it.

We have not come to the point yet in our thinking where we can say that children are an asset in this country instead of a liability. They are the greatest asset we have; yet we are not making it possible for people to raise the families they would desire. We have to bring in immigrants from other countries in order to build up our population. We should not forget that there are needy people in this country. They are not confined to

[Mr. Johnston.]

the group receiving family allowances, but may be found in the different classes that already have been mentioned, the old age pensioners and those who are physically not fit to work, the incurables. Surely in a country as prosperous as Canada it should never be said that we cannot adequately take care of these people who are in such dire need.

When I think of the waste in this country, especially as it has been revealed in the last few weeks, with government members standing up and trying to defend that extravagance and waste which runs into hundreds of thousands of dollars—the hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Thomas) says millions and Mr. Currie said it will never be estimated—

Mr. Dupuis: Well, don't mention a figure then.

Mr. Johnston: —it is difficult to understand why some members in this house say we cannot afford to increase these family allowances. They say we will do it when we can afford it, that is if the children have not starved to death beforehand. One of our first concerns should be to take care of the needy now and not wait for another ten, twenty or thirty years.

Mr. Speaker, I would not have spoken on this occasion in support of this resolution if I were convinced that Canada could not afford it. But from the facts and figures that have been given by the Prime Minister himself, other ministers in the cabinet and other hon. members in this house, I know that we can well afford to increase the family allowance, to increase the old age pension and to help those who are unable to help themselves. By helping those people we are helping ourselves to greater prosperity because we are providing a greater market right here where it is needed.

Let us judge whether or not these people need this assistance, Mr. Speaker. If we come to the conclusion that they need it, the next point we should look at is: Can Canada produce it, and is she producing it now? Those are the only two things we need to ask ourselves. Once those two questions are answered to our satisfaction, we should say: We will get the money to do it.

(Translation):

Mr. Hector Dupuis (St. Mary): Mr. Speaker, it will come as no surprise that a member for a constituency which swarms with large