

\$13.25 per month, and the average payment per child, \$5.90 per month.

Honourable senators, the Family Allowances Act has proved to be one of the most popular measures ever put on the statute books of this country, yet I suppose that even the most popular enactment can be improved as time goes by and experience is gained. The criticism that is most frequently made of the Family Allowances Act is that the payments to larger families are reduced. The present law provides that there shall be a reduction of \$1 per month for the fifth child, \$2 per month for the sixth and seventh children, and \$3 per month for the eighth and all subsequent children. The various social organizations interested in this legislation have repeatedly suggested that these reductions be abolished and this is what the bill proposes to do. It is felt that there is no justification for them. It was thought at first that it would cost less to raise the subsequent children in a family; that the unit cost would decrease as the number of children increased; that bulk buying and bulk cooking would have its effect, and that the younger children would be able to use the cast-off clothing, school books, and so forth of their older brothers and sisters. However, family budget studies have proven this argument to be unsound, and that the savings which I have mentioned have been offset by the need for additional accommodation. It has been found also that family allowances do not pay the entire cost of raising a child, and that the parents still pay the major portion of it. The more children there are, the more diluted the family resources become. Salaries and wages are in no way related to the number of children in a family, and so the largest families have the greatest need.

Honourable senators, it will not cost a great deal to correct this fault—which I regard as an abuse—because, comparatively speaking, large families are not numerous. It is true that big families seem to be more noticeable than others and are more often discussed, but statistics prove that there are not many of them in Canada. The number of families which will be affected by the total abolition of these reductions is only 150,000, or approximately 16 per cent of those now enjoying the benefits of family allowances. I think one of the cogent arguments in favour of this legislation is that it will remove the stigma which the Act appears to place upon large families. I know this was not intended, but the decrease in the payments does make it appear we have disapproved of large families. There is no particular reason why a mother and father with, say, ten children to look after, should draw less than two fathers and

mothers who have ten children to look after. But that seems to be the case at the present time. Is it not more logical to say that one father and mother with ten children have the greater need? I do not see how that argument can be met. Obviously the more parents there are the greater their ability to take care of the children, and the fewer the parents the greater the need. Quite a number of countries pay family allowances, but no other country makes this discrimination against large families.

Hon. Mr. Lacasse: Will the honourable gentleman permit a question? He has frequently used the expression "large families," and I should be glad if he would tell me what in his opinion constitutes a large family.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: My honourable friend, being a medical man, can probably answer that more authoritatively than I can.

Hon. Mr. Lacasse: I beg my honourable friend's pardon for persisting. The question was not asked in any jocular way. My honourable friend has frequently used the expression "large families," and for the purpose of better understanding his remarks I should like to know what he considers to be the minimum number of children required to make up a "large family".

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: What in fact constitutes a large family is a matter of opinion. To some people one child is a large family. However, being a lawyer, I will answer my honourable friend in the terms of the Act, which describes a large family as one of five or more children; and it was in that sense that I was using the expression.

I was saying that no other country discriminates against large families, be they of five children or more. Indeed, I know of two countries—France and Belgium—which increase the rate of allowance as the number of children in the family increases. We are not proposing that at present. What is proposed here is simply that the discrimination against parents of five or more children be abolished. That is the effect of this amendment, which I am sure will be highly appreciated by such parents. When the Act was passed it was not intended that there should be this discrimination, but that is how it has worked out.

The other amendment in the bill is to section 2 of the Act, which makes all children in Canada under the age of 16 years eligible for family allowances (a) if they are native born Canadians or (b) if they have been resident in Canada for three consecutive years. That is the general effect, but there are special provisions relating to members of the armed forces, a matter that I do not need to touch on just now. At present a great many chil-