

It is alleged that the federal government, in prescribing school attendance through these years as a condition for receiving family allowances, is in effect prescribing school attendance requirements without reference to the provinces whose responsibility it is under the British North America Act, to deal with all matters pertaining to education and to control the ages of school attendance and provide the necessary facilities for education. Regulations passed coincident with the inauguration of family allowances have actually laid down the policy which is now being incorporated into the present amendment to section 4, subsection 2.

The gist of this amendment is that an allowance shall cease to be payable if a child does not attend school in conformity with the age limits and other conditions laid down by the school attendance authorities of the province in which the child resides. In other words, we will take the judgment of the provincial school attendance authorities in each province as to whether or not a child is attending school in accordance with the laws of that province affecting school attendance. Where the provincial school attendance authorities are satisfied that a child is attending school in accordance with the laws of that province, we will continue the allowances. Where the provincial authorities are satisfied that a child absent from school is legally excused, or that it is not in any way violating the school attendance laws of the province—over the age limit, absent from school on work permit, et cetera—we will likewise continue to pay the allowances as long as the child does not enter the wage-earning class and cease to be maintained by his parent. If, however, the provincial authorities advise us that a child is of school attendance age and is absent from school without justifiable excuse, we will then discontinue the allowances. This means that our practice and procedure will necessarily vary from province to province in accordance with the varying requirements in each province with respect to school attendance.

It should be pointed out further, in connection with the new section 4 (2) (a), that the school attendance regulations with respect to Indians in each province and the school attendance regulations with respect to all children—Indians, Eskimos and whites—in the northwest territories or Yukon territory are matters over which the federal government, through the Department of Mines and Resources, has control. The amending clause, therefore, exempts Indian children in the provinces from the control of provincial school attendance regulations in so far as family

allowances are concerned and provides that an educational authority prescribed by regulation shall determine matters of school attendance with respect to Indians in the provinces or children in the northwest and Yukon territories in so far as family allowances are concerned. Under arrangements already set forth in the regulations, designated officials of the Department of Mines and Resources have been named as the educational authorities referred to in connection with these matters.

There is a reference in section 4 (2) of the act as it stands at present to equivalent training as being an acceptable substitute for school attendance. The question has arisen as to who should determine the adequacy of equivalent training. It would not seem to be proper that the federal authority should take it upon itself, in the administration of family allowances, to decide what, in any given case, is training equivalent to that which is offered by the provincial educational authorities. This would mean that the federal government would be setting itself up in judgment over provincial educational authorities and systems. Consequently, instead of prescribing equivalent training by regulation, as called for in the present act, the new amendment contemplates referring all questions of equivalent training to the appropriate provincial authorities in all cases where the provincial authorities have jurisdiction. It will be for the provincial authorities to certify in any given case whether or not training outside the ordinary school system is equivalent to that which would be furnished if a child were actually in school attendance.

Likewise the educational authorities designated by regulation to deal with Indian children and with children in the territories will pass upon questions of equivalent training in cases falling under their jurisdiction.

One of the best examples of equivalent training is the system of correspondence school education which is offered by most provinces for the instruction of children living in remote areas where school facilities are totally lacking.

Finally, some comment should be made on the final proviso in amending section 4(2)(a). We confidently expect that all the provincial educational authorities without exception will agree to cooperate with us in supplying the information and certification on matters pertaining to school attendance or equivalent training. In all provinces without exception we have developed good working relationships with the provincial educational authorities. The time might come, however, in some province when the provincial authorities for one reason or another would not wish to