

Mr. COLDWELL: What is the right hon. gentleman reading from?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I have been reading this afternoon, where I have read, exclusively from an address I made in Toronto in 1919. What I said in that address is based on what I had set forth in the book "Industry and Humanity", which I wrote hoping it might be a contribution to my country and to other countries in the post-war period. That is what I am seeking to accomplish to-day, along with other hon. members of this house, the opportunity being at hand to express now in the form of law upon our statutes means whereby the new order can be brought into being in an effective way.

May I now refer to the effect of the existing order as it relates to justice between those members of society who have families to support and those who have none. As I have said, the wage system takes no account whatever of the family. The wage system recognizes that a certain quantity of work entitles the performer of that work be he single or married to a certain reward, but it does not go beyond that.

As I mentioned at an earlier stage in the debate, the number of families in this country in which there are children under sixteen is approximately 1,500,000. The approximate number of children of these families is 3,500,000. Over half of those families benefit in whole or part from income tax allowances for children. The families with the lowest income do not benefit from the allowance at all. It is estimated that one-third of the 500,000 families in Canada receive the full income tax allowance; that is to say, an allowance for the bringing up of their children. One-third receive a partial benefit; one-third receive nothing. Over half the children get little or no benefit from income tax allowances, and they belong to the families where the need is greatest. I ask hon. members whether that is justice either to parents or to children, having in mind that the parents of families have rendered the state its most necessary of all services, namely, provided it with its citizenry for the years to come. Surely those who have assumed that obligation are entitled to special consideration. The one way in which that consideration can be made certain and effective is to see that those who have families do receive out of the national income some return which would help them to meet the obligations of bringing up their families on at least a minimum standard of life applicable to all. Equally the children in families who constitute the future citizenry of the country are entitled, in the interest of the country itself, to have the assurance that they

will have during the early and formative period of their lives a certain minimum of security against lack of nourishment, lack of clothing, lack of shelter, lack of food and lack of adequate education.

I should like to conclude with a reference to the effect upon the nation itself of the efforts of the system as it prevails at the present time. A nation's population is its first asset. If from any cause a country's population be reduced in numbers or vitality, its strength relatively is weakened. If men are drafted for the army they must be taken in large part from industry; if killed, wounded or enfeebled, industry suffers. If, in industry, human life is destroyed or impaired, the nation's manpower is thereby lessened. If unsanitary conditions and congested industrial areas breed disease and spread contagion and infection, no distinction of either person or class is respected. No service to the community or to industry can be greater than that which contributes to the prevention of accident and disease, or any form of impairment of health and efficiency. What physical and mental overstrain, and under-pay and under-feeding are doing for the race in occasioning infant mortality, a low birth rate and race degeneration, in increasing nervous disorders and furthering a general predisposition to disease, is appalling. These are the problems which require first consideration, if decadence is not to be the fate of industrial communities.

The war has postponed, as I have said, the hour of social reform; but it has served to arouse communities to the need of improvement in social conditions. A revitalized citizenry is now seen to be a part of the problem of preparedness and defence. An awakened social conscience demands that conditions which make for ruin and decay in urban or rural communities must be eliminated, that the well-being of society as a whole may be conserved. Standards of living conditions and standards of working conditions are now definitely recognized as wholly essential to community well-being. This above everything else I wish to stress in relation to families that are in humble circumstances, facing the conditions that must be faced to-day in a world like ours. To save the spirit of men from being crushed is quite as important as to prevent their bodies from being broken or infected. Many a man's spirit fails when, through no fault of his own or of his family, efficiency is permanently impaired through accident or savings become exhausted by unemployment or sickness, or where a new life in the home suggests an additional burden instead of a joy. Much invalidity and penury