

Family Allowances

in the book deals with fisheries, and was written by Professor Stewart Bates, professor of commerce at Dalhousie university, and now economic adviser to the Department of Fisheries in Ottawa. Professor Bates, after referring to the state of the fishing industry at the outbreak of the war, goes on to say:

The money income derived from catching and processing fish in the shore communities averaged less than \$300 per annum per man while that of fishermen in larger centres, like that of Halifax and Lunenburg, although averaging \$1,000 on bigger vessels, was still low compared to other trades of comparable skill, risk and hardship.

I have referred to the maritime fishing industry because the fishermen are a class who will benefit greatly by family allowances but whose status would not necessarily be affected by an increase in wage levels. In 1939 there were, in Nova Scotia alone, 17,335 inshore and off-shore fishermen. I should mention also our farmers. They are also a class not necessarily benefited by an increase in wage levels but who will be greatly benefited by family allowances.

I should like to refer to the report of the Rowell-Sirois commission on dominion-provincial relations. This report shows that education and welfare expenditures in Nova Scotia are materially below the per capita average for Canada. In the words of the report, "the province shares with New Brunswick the unhappy distinction of having the longest unfavourable economic history of any Canadian province." The per capita wealth of Nova Scotia and the annual income of Nova Scotians are lower than that of most provinces. At the same time living costs are high. In peace time our provincial revenues were insufficient to do more than take care of our normal requirements. They could not possibly support a programme of family allowances such as is proposed. Other provinces with greater resources and more buoyant revenues might be able to do so.

In Nova Scotia where education and welfare expenditures are below the national per capita average, the establishment of a national minimum level of well-being for children would be of tremendous benefit to our people. There is a tendency these days for provinces and municipalities to bring all their problems to Ottawa for solution. Here is a proposal by Ottawa to take care of one of our most pressing and urgent provincial requirements—an improvement in the standard of life of our young children. I welcome and support the splendid programme of family allowances that is proposed.

Let me add one more word. While only 29.63 per cent of the total population of Canada is under sixteen, slightly more than

[Mr. W. C. Macdonald.]

thirty-one per cent of the total population of Nova Scotia is under that age. These figures are based on those given in a return made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. MacKinnon) to a question asked by the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Bruce), to be found on page 4144 of *Hansard* of June 26 and on the figures to be found in the official handbook, "Canada, 1944", published under the authority of the Minister of Trade and Commerce.

In conclusion, I would say that when one views this measure from all angles it can be safely said that the family allowance programme will be of great benefit to Nova Scotia, financed as it will be by all the people of Canada.

It is fitting that this bill should be sponsored by our beloved Prime Minister. His whole life has been consecrated to the cause of human welfare. He has given magnificent leadership to his country throughout the war. The people of Canada are happy in the certain knowledge that he will continue to lead them, not only until the end of the war, but also in the task of winning the peace that is sure to come.

Mr. J. A. ROSS (Souris): Mr. Speaker, I desire to make a few observations on this bill No. 161, to provide for family allowances. The Atlantic charter and the four freedoms expressed an ideal, and we now have a great opportunity to assist in the progress, achievement and welfare of the common man of our country and his dependents. May I say that I have always favoured some form of family assistance.

As a municipal official I had an experience, which I believe is equalled by few members of the present house, during the great devastation and depression—the greatest since confederation—which prevailed in the southern part of the prairie provinces. As a result of the contact I had with many families I became impressed with the necessity for some assistance along family lines. During the years of the depression this same government headed by the same Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) set up what was known as the Rowell-Sirois commission to study conditions in Canada from coast to coast. They spent a great deal of time in receiving many briefs from leading organizations throughout Canada and they duly made their report to the government. I am sorry to think that the present government have completely ignored that report. They have done worse than that; they have added to the difficulties which that report pointed out, by implementing the recommendations of the social insurance commission of the province of Quebec.