

I wish to indulge in this evening. I should, however, like to concentrate particularly on one thing. I must say I was a little disappointed when I looked through the various sections of the bill, and gave special attention to section 5. To-night I should like to devote a few minutes of the time at my disposal to speak about one very large group of Canadians, a group which, although not specially represented in the house, commands the interest of every hon. member. The group of which I speak consists, roughly, of 2,000,000 children in Canada. I should have liked to see in the bill—and I still have hopes of seeing it—a separate paragraph in section 5 stating that under the powers given to the minister he may set up a special branch to deal with all matters pertaining to child welfare. In my view the time has definitely come when we should have a certain group of officials dealing specifically with all problems relating to children.

If we tackle the needs of children at the present time, and if we give all the attention that is required to the development of their health and their upbringing, then within a short space of time—possibly only fifteen or twenty years—we shall seriously reduce our needs for hospitalization, and for all the cares and cures we require to-day.

At the present time we have only two sections of government which deal specifically with the needs of children. Under the Department of Pensions and National Health work is being done by Doctor Couture, who has published an excellent book entitled, I believe, "Mother and Child". The book has had some circulation; but I must confess that in my opinion it has not reached the homes it should have reached. I must be honest and state that although I have copies of it in my office in this building, I have not once seen a copy of that book in any rural home I have visited—where it is needed so desperately. Then, in the Department of Labour we have special officials whose duty it is to look after the day nursery scheme, and creches. I cannot help feeling, however, that this service is quite inadequate to meet the needs of the children of this country.

I would say that any section of the new department, whose officials would be charged with looking after the needs and care of children, would have as its main task the carrying out of a very wide range of educational services, through all types of propaganda available to a department of that kind. This would include the press, women's magazines, radio and films. All matters regarding child hygiene and child welfare should be brought

[Mrs. Nielsen.]

before the public with much greater force than has been done in the past, and I believe there would result very rapidly a growing consciousness on the part of mothers with respect to the things required by their children.

It would seem that we are about to enact legislation to provide children's allowances. Much as I hesitate, or rather dislike saying this publicly, yet I am a little afraid that, through a lack of knowledge, in many instances those children's allowances will not be used in the best interests of the children concerned. While I am going to support the idea of children's allowances, still I feel that much of their value will be wasted unless, at the same time, they are accompanied by a wide educational campaign which will provide mothers with the information they need to have respecting the best way of spending the money in the interests of their children.

Definitely I believe that the child welfare branch should take over from the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) that section of his department which deals with creches and day nurseries. I know the minister likes dealing with men, but I am wondering whether he likes dealing with matters of this kind.

Mr. MITCHELL: I like dealing with babies, too.

Mrs. NIELSEN: I think those matters could be dealt with more adequately by a branch such as I have mentioned.

There is a great need, particularly in rural areas, where we have not the same facilities as are found in cities and larger centres, to have more propaganda and more widely circulated information for mothers, by way of literature, with respect to pre-natal and post-natal care. I cannot appraise too greatly the marvellous work which could be accomplished by officials in such a branch in that field.

There is one other thing which I believe would bring very good results, and that is to have such a department carry on a special campaign with respect to child nutrition. This would be not only an educational campaign, but something of a practical nature. Again, as I said before, the spending of money for children's allowances should be done in such a way that the children would actually receive the value from the expenditure of money. Personally, I cannot think of any single project which could be carried out in Canada where, for the same expenditure of money, the government could provide Canada with the same amount of good returns as by expending it on a nutritional campaign. This could start out by having a practical applica-