

that it ill becomes an hon. member of parliament to speak of any important piece of legislation brought forward for enactment by the parliament of Canada as a mere paper gesture.

Then I come again to what was said by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker), who said, "We have had several measures put on the statutes. We have had several departments created. Tell us something this department is going to do; tell us some measure with which it is going to be concerned." I do not know whether my hon. friend was in the house this afternoon when I drew particular attention to one of the most important measures ever placed before any parliament in any country, notice of which appears on the order paper of this house at this moment, in my name; that is the measure to establish family allowances in Canada. That measure will require to be very carefully worked out. Its administration is not going to be easy. The government does not imagine for a moment, human nature being what it is, that there may not be occasions when efforts will be made to show that the purposes which the measure seeks to attain have not been fulfilled in their entirety. In administering that measure we shall require ample safeguards that the money voted by this parliament will be used for the purposes for which it is intended. Some considerable time will be required to prepare for the administration of a measure of such proportions, to make sure that the moment it comes into operation, we shall be in a position to carry out the obligations of the statute in a way that will amply ensure that all expenditures are devoted to the particular purpose for which they are intended. But that is one measure the administration of which might at that well call for a department of welfare.

While I am on this subject I should like to say a word on a matter which arises out of it. This measure, being on the order paper, no hon. member of this house is by the rules permitted to discuss it. It cannot be discussed until it is brought before the house. Knowing this, and knowing that he must know the rules that govern in these matters, I was not a little surprised to read the other evening that the leader of the Progressive Conservative party, Mr. John Bracken, had come out in the public press with a statement that this important piece of social legislation constituted a national bribe, giving as his reason for that statement that the date on which the allowances are to commence has been fixed as from July 1 of next year. I wish Mr. Bracken were in this house. I would ask him to repeat that state-

ment, though I am perfectly sure he would not; Mr. Bracken does not remain out of this house without reason. If he would repeat such a statement here I would appeal to His Honour the Speaker, and ask if any man, leader of a party or not, is entitled to use such an expression with respect to legislation before this house. He would be obliged to withdraw the term, and he knows it. In what position are we placed? This is something I wish to emphasize to hon. members and to the people of this country. In what position is this parliament being placed before the people of Canada when the leader of a political party is granted licence to say what he pleases with respect to legislation before this parliament, and no one can call him to order if he violates the rules that have been laid down to safeguard debate and public discussion on great issues? There will be a reckoning one of these days in the matter of lawmaking, where those who are responsible because they are representatives of the people and have seats in parliament are bound to observe rules in the discussion of public questions and discussion is permitted to be carried on outside parliament with no regard or respect for rules by those who have been chosen as leaders of great parties and cannot be obliged to make good their assertions.

I did not intend to speak of that matter to-night; I shall have occasion to speak of it at another time. I wish to say, however, with respect to that particular measure, that I was responsible for fixing the date at July 1 of next year. I took that responsibility for this reason; I have told this house and this country that there will be an election either during the present year or next year, before the efflux of time of the present parliament, which means that this parliament will be dissolved before that measure can come into force. How then can it be said to constitute a bribe? I was seeing to it that it could not be made anything of the kind. I am not going to do what a former leader of the party opposite once did on the eve of an election. I remember an important election when money for wheat in storage was distributed throughout the whole of western Canada within a couple of days before the polling took place. I am going to take great care to see that no one can say that a great social measure of this kind is to have its prestige lowered by being introduced in any way which could be open to question.

Mr. GRAYDON: Why do we have social welfare thrown into politics, like you are doing to-night?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Speaker—