

*Family Allowances*

Mr. GREEN: I think that is where the bill is wrong. These children may not be brought to Canada for several years. I suggest that their parents are just as much entitled to the payment of these allowances as are parents in Canada. I ask the Prime Minister to give very careful consideration to this suggestion. Some of our men have been in Great Britain for between four and five years and some of them have two or three children. These soldiers, sailors and airmen have no source of income beyond their pay and allowances, and I see no reason why they should not receive payments in respect of their children even though the children may be in Great Britain.

The second suggestion has to do with the concern of organized labour about this bill. Organized labour fears that the payment of these allowances will tend to keep wages down. Many of the most responsible labour leaders in the country say that the first concern of this nation should be to see that every Canadian who wants to work can get work and at a decent wage, at a wage sufficient to enable him to maintain himself and family in a proper way. Any government of Canada must recognize that that is a statement of actual fact. From now on that is one of the most important objectives that any government can keep before it. There is a fear that this objective may be lost sight of; that the payment of family allowances will detract attention from the main objective of organized labour. I think those fears are well founded. Why would it not be possible to insert a provision in the bill to provide that family allowances are not to be taken into account in the setting of wages? I do not know just how it could be done, but it certainly could be done in the case of dominion government contracts. I suggest to the Prime Minister that he have his officials give consideration to inserting a section in the bill to the effect that these allowances are not to be taken into account in the setting of wages.

The third suggestion has to do with mothers' allowances. At the present time these are paid by the provincial governments. We have had provision in British Columbia for the payment of mothers' allowances for many years. They have proved most helpful but they are pitifully small. As I read section 8 of the bill it gives the government power to refuse to pay these family allowances where a mother's allowance is being paid by the province. That may or may not be the intention of the section, but it is open to that interpretation. I submit that children whose mothers receive mothers' allowances should receive these family allow-

[Mr. Claxton.]

ances just the same as any other children. In our province the mother must be a widow, so that it would mean that there is no breadwinner. Such a family would very clearly be entitled to assistance.

The fourth suggestion has to do with the bill itself. It contains sixteen sections covering about four and a half pages. I must admit that I expected a bill of about one hundred pages and several hundred sections. I think if the proper thing had been done we would have had that kind of bill. This bill gives this house and the Canadian people only half the story. The bill is simply a framework; it is a skeleton bill. Practically all the details are left to regulations. I consider that a bad feature of the bill. I would refer, for example, to section 3, which commences with these words:

Subject as provided in this act and in regulations.

That is the section covering the payment of the allowances. Surely this house and the country are entitled to know exactly the conditions under which payments are made. The details should be given in this section. We find much the same in section 4, subsection 1, which reads:

The allowance shall be payable only after registration of the child, and shall commence in the first month after registration, and shall be payable to a parent in accordance with regulations or to such other person as is authorized by or pursuant to the regulations to receive the same.

I think this house is entitled to know to whom and under what conditions the money is to be paid. It is not good legislation to have a blanket provision for regulations. We find the same thing in section 5 which provides:

The allowance shall be applied by the person receiving the same exclusively towards the maintenance, care, training, education and advancement of the child, and, if the minister or such officer as is authorized by regulations in that behalf is satisfied that the allowance is not being so applied, payment thereof shall be discontinued or made to some other person or agency.

Who is to be given that power? This house should know and the country should know. It should not be left to regulations. We find a similar provision in section 6, which provides for appeal, and which reads:

If any person is dissatisfied with a decision as to his right to be paid an allowance or as to the amount of an allowance payable to him or as to any other matter arising under this act, he may appeal against such decision to a tribunal to be established and conducted in accordance with regulations, and the decision of the tribunal shall not be subject to appeal or review by any court of law.