

*Family Allowances Act*

1951 had decreased to 58,650,000 hundred-weight, or approximately 2 per cent. From 1941 to 1951 the population of Canada increased 18.6 per cent. In other words, in the period from 1944 to 1952, although the consumption of milk was going down, on the other hand our population was increasing rapidly. From the figures that I have already given I estimate that from 1944 to 1952 the per capita consumption of milk in Canada went down 10 per cent.

I think part of the reason for the reduction in the consumption of milk can be attributed to the fact that the family allowance cheque was steadily losing its purchasing power. There is no one in this house who can say that Canada cannot produce all the milk that our people can consume if they have the finances with which to purchase it. As a matter of fact the dairy industry is looking today for increased markets. That industry in the face of a United States embargo on cheese and other milk products is finding it most difficult to continue efficient production. I believe that an increase in family allowances at this time would be followed by an increase in the consumption of milk and that in turn would react to the benefit of our dairy industry. The same could be said in relation to our poultry industry and in relation to our textile industry.

We have lost our overseas markets for many agricultural products. Because of inflation, because of the decrease in the purchasing power of the family allowance cheques, the mothers of Canada are finding considerable difficulty in maintaining purchases of the very commodities that are in surplus supply in this country. I advocate an increase in family allowances at this time because I think it is essential to the welfare of our children.

As I have stated, another argument that might be used in favour of an increase in family allowances is that it would provide a greater home market for our poultry, dairy and textile industries at a time when they are losing many of their former markets. The present family allowance cheque is pretty small. Five dollars per month will not buy many quarts of milk. Five dollars per month will not contribute very much toward the cost of providing for a new child coming into the home. During the debate last year I quoted an article from *Life* magazine which stated that in New York city it cost approximately \$400 to provide all the things necessary for the well-being of a newly-born child. The article went on to state that the various items of equipment, the utensils and clothing necessary, might be purchased for as low as \$275, but that was considered to be

the rock bottom price. It would take a great many family allowance cheques to pay the cost of the things necessary to provide for the care of a newly-born child even at that lower price.

Speaking in this debate last year the Minister of National Health and Welfare pointed out that we have a large defence program. It is true that we have a large defence program, but each year, even with our defence program, the real production of Canada keeps going up. The defence program is not going to continually take up that increase in real production. In recent weeks the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) has stated that in his opinion the danger of war is decreasing. I believe the Prime Minister is right. I look for at least a levelling off—if not a decrease—in our defence expenditures.

While our defence expenditures may level off or decrease, I hope for a continued increase in the real production of wealth in this country. In recent years our wealth has been increasing at the rate of between 4 and 5 per cent annually. That annual increase of between 4 and 5 per cent in our gross national production is sufficient to cover all our social security payments including family allowances, old age and blind pensions and those made under other measures.

So we now have an opportunity to provide an increase in family allowances, partially because our defence program is likely to level off before too many months go by and because the real production of wealth in Canada is likely to continue to increase. Even if that were not so I would still advocate an increase in family allowances. In advocating an increase in family allowances I would point out that the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Sinclair), formerly parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, in a well-delivered speech in this house before Christmas argued that social security payments were transfer payments, that they were not for the provision of materials and labour for the use of the government. In other words, an increase in family allowances does not increase the burden upon the Canadian people; an increase in family allowances merely transfers purchasing power from the more well-to-do to those less well-to-do, in this instance to Canadian parents.

I say that there is a glaring need at the present time for a redistribution of purchasing power. I was amazed to read a publication put out by the dominion bureau of statistics based on the census of 1951 and entitled "Labour Force Wage Earners". That publication showed that in 1951 there were in