

Family Allowances Act

asked in effect to administer and apply the Family Allowances Act in the case of children under their care. I drew attention to the statement made by the superintendent of the children's aid society of Toronto to this effect, that the cost of bookkeeping and other services in connection with the allowance is "colossal." That was his expression in his last annual report. Having regard to what the minister said at that time, from which I inferred that the matter was under consideration, is the acting minister in a position to indicate if progress has been made in the consideration of that question? Unless some assistance is given to these children's aid societies the present form of administration will continue to cast an unfair burden on them.

Mr. McCANN: I am informed that, to offset the extra expense which children's aid societies are put to, there is a considerable saving by virtue of the fact that they are allowed to spend some of the monthly payments for children in other directions; for example, keeping children at summer camps and the like, where under other circumstances and in former years that expense would have to be borne entirely by the children's aid societies.

Mr. COCKERAM: Is that an additional allowance?

Mr. McCANN: No.

Mr. FLEMING: I do not wish to repeat what I said in the house at that time. I thought the minister might be able to give the committee some further information. His answer now seems to indicate that the policy of the department is opposed to giving consideration to the request of these children's aid societies and other similar societies which have children as wards for some allowance for the bookkeeping expense to which they are put. Of course the regulations did permit the application of part of the allowance to what is called "additional benefits". All these societies acknowledge quite readily the benefit that that conferred upon them in caring for their wards. But over and above that, attention was drawn to what, in the case of the children's aid society of Toronto, was called the "colossal expense" of bookkeeping and administration involved, and it was my hope that the department might have given some consideration to that. I—perhaps wrongly—inferred from what the minister said on that occasion, about six weeks ago, that the department was giving consideration to it. I thought perhaps the acting minister might be able to give the committee some further information.

[Mr. Fleming.]

Mr. McCANN: Apart from the fact that the hon. gentleman has brought this matter to the attention of the house, and that he says the children's aid society—I assume, of Toronto—has made a protest with reference to the increased expense by virtue of the increased amount of work in keeping records and the like, I am informed that no representations have been received from any children's aid society in the country along the line of asking for any extra compensation because they have extra work to do in the line of records.

Mr. FLEMING: I am sorry to disagree with the acting minister, but that is not what the minister said on that occasion. It was not that the Toronto society was the only one that had complained; the minister indicated that requests of the same kind had been received from other parts of the country. I am not going to press the inquiry if the acting minister has not any further information. I thought some further information might have developed from a departmental review of the question during the last six weeks.

Mr. McCANN: I think the hon. gentleman might check up on that, because I am informed that the Minister of National Health and Welfare did not make any such statement at that time. I do not contradict the hon. gentleman, but he might well be mistaken.

Section agreed to.

Section 3 agreed to.

Bill reported, read the third time and passed.

FEDERAL DISTRICT COMMISSION

PROVISION FOR ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONERS, TRANSFER OF CERTAIN JURISDICTION, AND GRANTING OF MONEY

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Acting Prime Minister) moved the second reading of bill No. 357, to amend the Federal District Commission Act.

Mr. T. L. CHURCH (Broadview): I am objecting to the principle of the bill at a time like this as a half-way measure. I think it is a great mistake to have fifteen men appointed to undertake such work as this. A federal district commission is something for which the taxpayers of Canada have not at the present time sufficient funds, and I do not think large expenditures such as the government contemplates here are justified, especially when we consider how much is being collected from the people in the form of income tax, and what is being given to the city of Ottawa at