

*Family Allowances Act*

a few weeks ago, must always be associated with this project; for in the preparatory stages, in advising the government of the day, he contributed richly to this measure that has brought so much relief to those segments of our population whom we refer to as Canada's greatest resource, its children.

The hon. member who introduced the resolution, I am sure, spoke for his party. But I would point out to him that the only opposition to family allowances that I have heard in the house within recent times came from a member of his own party, the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Thatcher). I am not for one moment suggesting that the latter was not sincere when he complained about the expenditures involved in family allowances, but I wish simply to point out to the hon. member who proposed the resolution that everyone in the house now is in favour of the measure, with the single exception of one of his own colleagues.

The proposal put forward by my hon. friend is naturally one that captures and encourages the support of anyone who wants to see our children receive increasing opportunities. There is no one who could legitimately oppose that measure. But it is one thing to propose, and then it is another thing to be able to find responsible and practicable means of carrying out that proposal. And I suggest with vigour and sincerity to the hon. member who proposed this resolution that his suggestion is not practicable.

**Mr. Herridge:** Nor accepted by this group.

**Mr. Martin:** "Nor accepted by this group"—I would point out to the hon. member who interjected those words, that, beside the proposition put forward by the hon. member who moved the resolution, that is a very interesting interruption.

**Mr. Herridge:** I thought the minister was referring to the views of the hon. member for Moose Jaw, when I said that.

**Mr. Martin:** I am glad to note this intervention. Those things will have to stand side by side, and we will have to see whom we believe, in the context of things, deserves the greater approbation.

The significant thing, in answering the suggestion that the government should commit the people of Canada to an expenditure of \$192 million in addition to what has already been spent for family allowances, is that it is important to note the history of the administration of the measure. This would include not only its present total cost, but also all those related factors which would

enable a responsible man to come to a conclusion as to whether or not at this time, in the light of overriding obligations in regard to health, or other obligations of the government, this is the moment to embark upon such a proposal.

We have paid out in nine years in family allowances some \$2,131 million. That is the amount up to December 31, 1952. The expenditure on family allowances for the fiscal year 1951-52 is to be found at pages 140 and 141 of the report of the Department of National Health and Welfare, which I tabled last Thursday. That report indicates that the estimated cost of family allowance payments in the fiscal year 1951-52 will total \$320,880,854.

That in itself represents a substantial sum of money. There is only one source from which that money can come—indeed, there is only one source from which any expenditure of this or any other government can come—and that is from the hard work of the people of the country.

That fact cannot be emphasized too often; because it is one thing to suggest that there should be more social services—and I take second place to no hon. member in pressing for that objective—but, at the same time, if one wants to be responsible in his protagonism of legitimate social reform, there should constantly be brought home to the people a reminder as to the only source of all government expenditures.

May I say to the hon. member who at the moment, perhaps for another reason, is enjoying himself—perhaps I misunderstood him, and I will not go on to say what I was going to say, that he was laughing; I hope I am wrong in that—that the question before us is whether or not, in the face of the expenditure of \$320 million for family allowances, apart altogether from what other expenditures are maintained in the field of health and welfare on federal account, we can honourably impose upon the people of Canada at this time a further expenditure of \$190 million in connection with this one particular matter.

When you add to that the fact that we are spending over \$300 million on old age security payments, let alone the other expenditures which I am going to detail before I resume my seat, I question very much whether the people of Canada would agree that this is the moment to embark upon this particular proposal. Not only do I question that; I would say to the hon. gentleman that my correspondence and contacts as Minister of National Health and Welfare lead me to suggest that if there

[Mr. Martin.]