

*Family Allowances*

with a measure like this. It must be that they have never left the large cities, or, if they have gone through the country, they have kept their eyes closed. Services such as they describe cannot be provided in the small urban centres or the rural sections of this country. A very large proportion of our people live in those small urban centres and rural areas; and the social agencies built up in the large centres could not begin to take the place of these grants, which will enable parents to provide their children with more of the basic necessities of life.

Mention was made of food and clothing, but other difficulties were experienced in Saskatchewan even before the war. Because of the lack of money and purchasing power in the hands of the farmers in many of the rural areas of Saskatchewan, doctors found that they could not make enough out of their practices to pay expenses, and they had to leave. For distances of perhaps fifty to sixty miles there would be no doctor at all. In the winter time, after the roads were closed, the women in isolated farm homes would be snowbound, with the nearest doctor perhaps fifty miles away, knowing full well that if anything happened to one of the children or to themselves the crisis would have to be faced without medical help. If this purchasing power is placed in the hands of our people it will enable all districts to be better served as far as medical attention goes.

It is well known that there has been great disparity between the income of the rural areas and that of the urban areas. It is also well known that families in rural areas are larger, on the average, than those in urban areas. This measure will tend to overcome that disparity in income, and for that reason also I welcome it. It will help substantially in redressing that balance. In western Canada we experience crop failures from time to time, and our people are most grateful for the Prairie Farm Assistance Act, which gives them a certain amount of security in the event of the occurrence of that disaster. But the payments are not large, and these additional allowances will give them an even greater feeling of security. This will greatly add to the joy of living on our western prairies.

I have been discouraged and surprised by the attitude of a few labour leaders in this country who have opposed this measure. They may feel that by organizing they can drive up wages; but do they not realize that great numbers of people, including the casual wage-earning class, the so-called white collar class, and the people on our farms, cannot be assisted by their organizations? Surely their opposition to this measure, if we look at it

[Mr. Tucker.]

purely from their own point of view, should have been tempered by the thought that, after all, the greater part of the population of this country cannot organize in labour unions but is going to receive a tremendous benefit under this legislation. When they study the figures which have been given in this debate I hope they will withdraw the opposition they have expressed toward this most statesmanlike legislation.

In moving the second reading of this bill the Prime Minister referred to the Atlantic charter. I well remember when the Atlantic charter was signed and the suggestion was made that we were going to devote ourselves to bringing about freedom from fear and freedom from want among our people. At that time we felt that if we could bring about some amelioration of those conditions among our people it would be perhaps some compensation for the measureless misery and suffering of this war. If now, having held out those hopes to this nation, we do not follow through with measures which will bring about freedom from fear and freedom from want, we shall create a feeling from one end of this country to the other that our leaders have not been sincere with the people. I rejoice that this spirit of following through in connection with those hopes and promises which were held out to our beleaguered people in the dark days of 1940 has been made manifest as the star guiding this administration in the measures it is now taking looking to the well-being of our people.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Golding): Order. The hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. TUCKER: Surely, Mr. Speaker, the sacrifices made by our people at home; their willingness to devote themselves to the welfare of their country; the spirit in which many have left their loved ones, their children and gone forward into the hell of battle; the willingness with which our young people have risked everything they possess, all merit the support of this house and of future houses for all measures which will ensure that this devotion is properly requited by a grateful people.

Mr. G. E. WOOD (Brant): Mr. Speaker, it is with a measure of pride that I take this opportunity of supporting this most humanitarian piece of legislation, and also supporting my distinguished leader in this measure which I believe is dear to his heart. May I congratulate the hon. member for Rosthern (Mr. Tucker) upon the vigorous and splendid manner in which he marshalled his thoughts when speaking on this measure. I must con-