

*Social Security*

real love, that parents would not be separated from their children. They would object to their children being taken away from them to be sent to a hospital.

**Mr. Low:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Pouliot:** It must be the same in my hon. friend's constituency. It is the same all over Canada. I am not speaking of an exception. I am speaking of the love of parents for their children, a most admirable thing. If these children were sent to a hospital it would be much more costly than if a pension were awarded to these families as suggested in the resolution of the hon. member for Terrebonne. It will be much cheaper for the country to pay to such children or older people the same amount paid to people seventy or over, to the blind of twenty-one or over or to needy mothers who are paid directly by the provinces without any federal contribution. The dominion government should do something to equalize the pension paid by the provinces to needy mothers for their children up to the age of sixteen, and it should look after the invalids of the whole country. Here we have a country where the climate is healthy, the surroundings are beautiful and the scenery is glorious. In this country there is no reason why the sick and disabled should not be looked after by the state if their families have not the means to do so.

I do not want to take too much time of the house, but this is a matter I have at heart. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, and the minister what have been my observations in travelling around my constituency and visiting the poor among my constituents. I am interested in them largely because they never complain. They are proud and they have the dignity of pride. They are timid; they do not want to talk about their misfortunes. We have to become friends with them to learn about their lives; and to anyone who is given the privilege of hearing their sad stories of human misery there is a strong appeal. This is a confidence that can be given only by a friend to a friend; it is never given to a stranger. If I have suggested to the minister that there should be a check on the distribution of family allowances by means of the admirable nurses with the health units throughout Canada, it is because these women while visiting families where there are young children would be able to report to the government these sad cases of disability. Then many times the minister would have the joy of helping young people improve their lot by giving them better health. While the amount paid in family allowances is very large, about \$200 million—

**Mr. Martin:** It was \$307 million in the last calendar year.

[Mr. Pouliot.]

**Mr. Pouliot:** So much the better. We cannot complain about moneys spent to ensure the good health of all who live in this country. I am not for socialized medicine, but I am in favour of the extension of pensions to those who suffer most. Naturally there is a difficulty, and that is to establish what constitutes a disability which would entitle a person to that pension. That is a matter to be discussed by the learned members of the medical fraternity; but it can be done. It can be said that a child who suffers from infantile paralysis, and who will suffer from it all his life because he had not the opportunity the child of wealthier parents would have to go to hospital when the disease struck him, should be given every opportunity to recover and live to a ripe old age.

These are matters of the utmost interest to all, as will be agreed by any member of parliament who lives among his electors and listens to them. No one would refuse to help these people. At Ceylon it was decided that Canada should subscribe \$25 million to improve the living standards of Asia. We may think a lot about China, but the United States is spending more in a month bombarding Korea, destroying lives, than this government has undertaken to spend in that area in a year. I am not for the destruction of life; I am for the improvement of health conditions throughout Canada. If this country is rich enough to give away \$25 million and more to help improve conditions in Asia, I believe we should look after our own conditions first. We should be ashamed of ourselves if we do not pay attention to the poor, the humble and the sick in this country.

The minister has done very well. He has improved his department to such an extent that it is a pleasure for me to tell him so in this house; but his job is not finished. We are on the eve of social reform, which must start at the bottom. It would be ridiculous to give the old age pension to the rich and leave without help the sick and needy between the age of sixteen and seventy. Their sickness is an urgent call to the government, particularly to the minister, requiring their immediate attention to this matter. If we are to prepare for war, that is no excuse for not looking after our own people in this country who suffer in silence. If I speak loudly in this house today it is on their behalf. I am sure I have been heard, and that the minister will not do what has been done in the past. I am sure he will not postpone the matter until another session, but will see to it at this session that some help is given to invalids between the ages of sixteen and seventy; that is, excluding