

*Family Allowances Act*

a problem that must be reviewed; they too have something that the minister, I hope, will give every consideration to and resolve in the way in which they wish it resolved. I have told the minister that, if he resolves it in the way they suggest, it will have my blessing as one member of this house.

**Mr. Johnston:** That ought to help a lot.

**Mr. Macdonald (Edmonton East):** The hon. member will have an opportunity to make his own speech.

This proposed resolution to increase family allowance payments by \$192 million is something that takes more than just a moment's consideration on my part. We have a fine system of social security in this country. In addition to having the basis of the family allowances established as it was eight years ago at the amounts that are now payable, we have made it possible for the largest working force in Canada's history to be employed and earning fair wages, good wages compared with those paid a few years ago. There is room for improvement in the wages that are being paid to the people who are working; but the hon. member for Bow River well knows that in the province of Alberta we have never enjoyed such prosperity as has been brought to the citizens of that province by the manner in which the affairs of this country have been conducted by the federal administration.

**Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood):** Did they put the oil there?

**Mr. Ferrie:** No, but they sold the wheat, and wheat has got more to do with it than the oil.

**Mr. Macdonald (Edmonton East):** I hope that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) will use his usual good judgment. He is in his seat, and listening attentively to the remarks of hon. members on this resolution. I would ask him to make sure that it is within our ability at the present time to pay another \$192 million a year to increase by 60 per cent the family allowance figure set out by the hon. member who proposed the resolution.

This is one form of social security I wish to see retained on the statute books; and if it is ever going to be increased I want it to be increased to an amount we can sustain for all time to come.

I would hope that when the minister speaks he would take into consideration the amount of money involved, and that he would consider the resolution and, in the light of the amount of money available from the taxpayers of this country, consider the possibility

of supporting an increase in this form of social legislation.

**Mr. E. T. Applewhaite (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity provided by the resolution to speak briefly on one aspect of the family allowances question which is of particular concern to me. Before doing that however may I say that I most certainly welcome anything which would place more money at the disposal of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) to be spent for the benefit of the people of Canada. I feel confident he would enjoy spending it for that purpose, and that he would spend it wisely. What I do not know, however, is whether, if he had an additional \$192 million at his disposal at the moment, he would decide that this particular method of spending it is the best one, or whether there may be other even more pressing social problems now facing us.

The aspect of the problem with which I am more particularly concerned and of which I am more appreciative is the payment of family allowances to our native Indian population. I feel sure that interest in the mental, physical and moral welfare of our Indian population is not confined to any one political party, and in these observations I am not trying to play politics. Indeed, I would give due credit to hon. members on the opposite side of the house, just as I would to those on this side who have shown clearly that, irrespective of political affiliations, they have the interests of the Indians at heart.

I believe there is no hon. member who speaks as the official spokesman for the Indian population, and there are only a few of us who represent ridings in which the Indians are a major factor. In my constituency they form a large percentage of the population. I have had some opportunity to see how family allowance cheques have influenced and affected the lives of the Indians.

The annual report of the Department of National Health and Welfare for the year ended March 31, 1951, states that there were 57,587 Indian children in 20,014 families receiving allowances as of December 31, 1950. I regret to say that in the departmental report for the following year there is no comparable statistical figure; the actual figures for the Indians have not been set out. May I suggest incidentally to the minister that in next year's report those figures should be included.

I have no doubt however that the figures, if they were shown, would indicate an increase comparable with or greater than the proportion of increase among the rest of the