

We learned that in the British schools every child in attendance is given a daily milk ration. They are terribly short of milk but it is carefully rationed so that the invalid, the expectant mother and the child may get it, as well as the school children. The ration in the schools is small, only one-third of a pint; if the parents can afford it, they pay a half-penny, one cent, but if they cannot pay they get it free.

If we are building a better order in this country, as we ought to be, and laying the foundations for that order now, as we ought to do even in the midst of war, then one of our first cares should be for the children of the workers in industry and the children of the men who are serving in the armed forces. I believe that this involves not only one department but all the defence departments, the Department of Munitions and Supply, and I think the Department of Pensions and National Health. I urge that consideration be given to this problem at once, in order that we may not continue to lag behind. It irritates me when I look over the social legislation of certain other English-speaking countries and compare it with what we have in Canada; I realize that as a nation we lag continually behind some of the more progressive peoples of the world.

In regard to dependents' allowances, an excellent letter reached me before this discussion began in the house. It is from a former school teacher. It is well written, and I propose to read the parts of it which bear upon the problem we are discussing, because I think it expresses the situation better than I could myself. I quote:

In June, 1940, my husband joined the Canadian army as a private. Each of us considered it his duty and privilege to do so. At the time, living as I did in Alberta, my allowance and that of my two children seemed adequate. Gradually however as we began to need coats, medicine and so on it seemed like we just could not get along. I hired a girl and went back to my profession of teaching school.

We had been separated about a year when I decided to go to my husband. After all he was still in Canada, and if many other husbands stayed out of the armed forces to be with their families should we not have the chance to be together as much as possible? My two little girls wanted to be with their daddy if possible and he was very lonely for us.

So in August, 1941, we came to London (Ontario). It became apparent immediately that we could not get along unless I worked. I took my children to a day nursery and got employment in an office. After two months of this I became ill and had to quit work. Then we realized we were to have another baby.

Well, I needed medical care, my children needed clothes, and we got neither. I went to a doctor for five months. He prescribed medicine and a diet which I could not by any means

get. He advised dental care and eyeglasses—both impossible. And so, discouraged, he sent me a bill for his services. I took that to mean that he wanted no more to do with my case so I quit going to him, or anyone.

My children could not appear on the street all winter because we could not buy them coats. They cannot go out now because they haven't presentable shoes. I cannot appear on the street now because I have not been able to buy one garment to meet the requirements of my condition.

I have had to cut the children's milk allowance in half—and I don't get any when a quart a day has been prescribed. This is the first winter they have not taken cod liver oil. Their allowance of oranges and tomato juice has been diminished.

I am not a spendthrift, no one could be more saving than I in cooking, buying clothes, et cetera. At present I am knitting summer coats which will cost \$5 for both. I'd have to pay at least \$7 each if I bought them. I mend and mend and make over clothing.

I haven't anything for layette, and baby is due in July. We have to live in the poorest homes we have ever had. Our civilian friends have profitable employment, are living well. To try to help out I am taking care of a twenty months' old boy in addition to my other work. I do our laundry in the bathtub and dishpan. Here is a sample budget:

\$30.00—rent.

4.50—hydro and gas (in cold weather fuel extra).

1.00—reading material.

1.30—insurance (children).

4.50—milk.

35.00—groceries, soap, etc.

\$76.30

My allowance is \$79. Can anyone tell me where our clothes are coming from? And my hospital and doctor care? And layette? And ice for the refrigerator this summer? And medicine? And a toy or amusement once in a while for the children? And care for them when I am not able to do it? It's a problem too difficult for me to solve and I never did have much difficulty with mathematics.

This is a point to which I wish to direct particular attention, because I do not believe a case of this type has come before the house so far.

My husband is a sergeant—without pay. He is more conscientious than many with pay.

I take it that means a sergeant's pay.

He's a top ranking mechanic at the trades school, was chosen recently because of his ability, along with eleven others of high marks, for draft. Still has his sergeant's rank—but no pay. No trade's pay either. But he pays sergeant's fees—lives a sergeant's life—on a private's pay. Don't take my word on his ability; I'll refer you to—

I shall leave out the name of the officer and give it to the minister later.

—or other officials here. And he is not a man to spend money on himself either. But his ambition to become a good soldier must be dampened when he thinks of us here at home.