

*Family Allowances*

vividly were the cases that came to me seeking advice and counsel as to how the wives and mothers on the farm could take care of the needs of the children during that period. They suffered these hardships despite the efforts of the municipalities and of the provincial and dominion governments, because I think that neither any of these governments nor most of us who took an interest in these matters during that period realized the intensity of the problem, nor did we understand the measures of relief that we now know should have been adopted at that time.

I recollect, as I say, the real hardship which faced the fathers and mothers on the farms of southern Saskatchewan when they found themselves incapable of supplying their children with the necessary food and clothing and opportunities of continuing their school education. Nothing excited my sympathy and desire to help so much as that experience during the drought period; and while in these last few years that particular area, with some exceptions, has been visited with good crops, we know that drought will come again, and once more the mothers and fathers will be presented with a like problem where the income from the farm fails for some cause over which they have no control. When I think of the benefits which will flow from this measure into those homes in the shape of a monthly cash income, I say to those hon. members who have not experience of the conditions to which I have referred, that they can hardly credit the new hope, the new courage, the upbuilding of the spirit which will come as a result of those benefits received in times of dire distress.

While someone has pointed out that this bill is aimed at assisting the children of the nation, in my opinion it will assist the parents, because no parent can be a good parent, or create that atmosphere which should surround a home, if dire necessity is knocking at the door. So that I believe this measure will accomplish something for parents as well as for children. I believe, too, that there is a psychological problem which will be met, in part at least, by the provisions of the bill. Any parent would agree with me that a child cannot grow up and develop into the wholesome type of Canadian citizen that we like to have if the home is an unhappy one, owing to economic necessity and the inability of parents to provide those things which are needed for the proper upbringing of children. As I read letters in the press, or hear it stated that there are parents who will not discharge the duty expected of them, I reflect that that type will be a small, almost infinitesimal minority. But even that minority,

[Mr. Graham.]

let me suggest, may be the consequence of no such provision in a bygone generation as is contained in this bill, because in all likelihood those people are the products of homes which were visited with some of the troubles which this measure is attempting to cure. So that in that way, remembering that the children of to-day are the parents of to-morrow, I believe that this legislation will do a great deal for family life, for the father, the mother and the children in the home.

There is one other result which will flow from this measure that, to my mind, has great importance. It is connected with a problem which all hon. members would like to assist in finding a solution for. Roughly speaking, the population of Canada is divided equally between males and females; and when we remember that the establishment of a home and a family is preceded by the institution of marriage, we cannot but feel that Canada in its national policies should encourage in every possible way the marriage of our young women to our young Canadian men. I believe that the overwhelming majority of young women find in the career of a wife and a mother the career which most satisfies the desires of the heart. I know that, if they are denied marriage, a home and a family, they claim the right not to be excluded from any other vocation; but I believe that our national policies will satisfy that great and proper desire, that normal and natural desire on the part of the vast majority of our young women, if those policies are directed to encouraging marriage, the establishment of a home and the raising of a family.

When I hear members of the official opposition state that this particular measure will unfairly assist the large families of certain racial groups, I submit that that is a wholly unwarranted as well as too narrow a viewpoint regarding the results which will flow from this bill. Let us consider it for a minute, and in dealing with this I am not referring merely to the high birth rate which has long been a tradition of the province of Quebec. Many other racial groups in my own and other provinces have the same tradition—and it is a healthy and wholesome one,—that of having large families; and as someone said to-night, we would all be proud of the parents who faced the responsibilities of raising a large family if we were assured that those children would be raised to be happy, healthy and productive Canadians. I suggest that this bill will have exactly the opposite effect to that suggested by the leader of the official opposition. In all likelihood it will not increase the number of children in the groups who now have the traditionally large families, but on the other hand it will encourage other groups