

The Budget—Mr. Martin

only has that proposal been implemented, it has been increased. Not only have the allowances been increased, but important amendments have been introduced. First of all we lowered the qualifying age for blindness allowance from 40 to 21, and this very session there stands in my name a bill to reduce the age from 21 to 18 and to increase the income ceilings for the blind. In that particular, we have implemented a proposal which was part of a package deal made in 1945 and which, for the reasons I have mentioned, was not carried out.

A disability pension was suggested in 1945, and we now have on the statute books of our country, notwithstanding our failure to get full agreement from all the provinces in 1945, a scheme to provide for disability allowances in co-operation with the provinces. There again we have implemented a proposal made in 1945.

Mr. Fleming: Ontario had it before you did.

Mr. Martin: Unemployment insurance was not one of the proposals made because of the fact that it had come into being in the early days of the war. The fact is, however, Mr. Speaker, that there was much discussion about unemployment insurance and health and welfare, at the 1945 conference. There are the amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act that were introduced two and a half years ago, and the amendments now being introduced by my colleague the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg). These accomplishments support the stand taken by Mr. Claxton, then minister of national health and welfare, at the 1945 conference that the federal government proposed to make certain refinements in and additions to that particular kind of legislation.

I find that in addition, grants have been made for water conservation projects that were proposed in 1945. There have been agreements for assistance in forestry programs, and for a joint project to counter the infestation of spruce budworm in New Brunswick forests. These are grants that were proposed in 1945, and which it is suggested in this debate today have been abandoned or are not being implemented.

So, Mr. Speaker, beyond any doubt I was justified when I rose in my place during the speech of the Leader of the Opposition and asked him whether it was not a fact that in the field of health and welfare over two-thirds of the proposals made by the federal government had been implemented. I say, therefore, that this government deserves at the hands of the country, as it has received at the hands of the country, commendation for its determination to bring forward and implement these very difficult proposals, in

spite of the fact that the government was not able to get simultaneously the kind of arrangements with certain provinces which would have made these things financially possible. It is to the credit of this government's responsible concept of social reform that it has been able to bring in these measures, in the way it did, in the face of our existing difficulties, in the face of the fact that we were then spending over \$250 million on family allowances and will spend close to \$360 million this year.

I stand fearlessly before the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, and ask this question. Will he not admit that no other government, no other political party in our country, except the C.C.F., in the face of the obligations of the government during the last decade, has demonstrated by its program that it would be willing to inaugurate those bold undertakings? I have excluded the C.C.F.—

Mr. Drew: I assume, Mr. Speaker, that I have been asked a question. I say most definitely that this government is not the only government that would have done it, and that they have been simply following the progress of social development that has been supported by all parties. Any suggestion that we opposed any of those measures is false, and has nothing to do with the statement I made.

Mr. Martin: I would certainly be lacking in natural understanding if I did not anticipate the kind of answer the Leader of the Opposition has made. But I do not want to take the time this afternoon, when our feelings are at their best, to remind him that there are certain great social measures now on the statute books which not only his party but he himself vigorously opposed.

Mr. Drew: That statement is not true.

Mr. McIlraith: It is true.

Mr. Martin: I have excluded the C.C.F., Mr. Speaker. I have done so deliberately because I believe that the C.C.F., having no expectancy of ever sitting on this side, have decided that the wise thing for them to do is to put forward all sorts of proposals, no matter how cockeyed.

Mr. Knowles: But you like them; you have stolen some of them.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hand the verbatim report of the plenary discussions of the 1945 conference. I am now looking at page 569, and I am going to quote the words of the Leader of the Opposition. I quote them because of his last observation. I think they indicate clearly that the Leader of the Opposition, notwithstanding what may