

Supply—Health and Welfare

government to look again at the Hall Commission report wherein they point out that we need doctors and we need health resource funds immediately to start building in the next few years for the number of doctors and the other personnel that will be necessary at that time.

I favour prepaid medical care. I work now under the scheme in Saskatchewan and have done so since its inception on July 23, 1962. But I would hate to see any more schemes introduced in this country by following the same rough road by which the scheme came into being in Saskatchewan because it caused heartache and disturbance among the profession and the people of that province. I do not wish to see this happen anywhere else.

As I say, Mr. Chairman, I favour prepaid medical care but not at the expense of the entire economy or the quality of medical care. Surely in growing up we must first crawl and then walk before we run. Surely it is wise to provide care primarily where it is needed and specifically where it will do the most good. Provide the doctors, provide the nurses, provide modern hospitals with modern equipment, an adequate number of beds and all those other things I have mentioned and you will remove most of my objections to this plan.

Above all—and may I address this request to the minister—do not forget to have adequate consultation with those providing the service. This is something that got lost in the shuffle in the province I represent. Remember that the Canadian Medical Association asked the former prime minister, now Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, to set up the Hall Commission. Give the medical profession ample opportunity to discuss the matter with you, Mr. Minister, and you will find the path ahead a smooth one. Given such consultation, even the smokescreens of socialistic sophistry will dissipate in the cool winds of reason and understanding.

• (4:30 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. Allard: Mr. Chairman, if the present government often considers its administration with satisfaction, it happens, on the other hand, that millions of Canadians are unhappy about the huge sums of money spent on national defence and the complacency of the government with regard to the interest on the public debt.

Faced with poverty and increasing needs, those Canadians are asking the government to increase family allowances.

The Family Allowances Act was sanctioned on August 15, 1944 and went into effect on July 1, 1945. At the outset, the allowances decreased progressively with the number of children, but the government corrected that situation in 1949.

Apart from a small increase in 1957, the allowances have remained much the same until now.

Here is how the system works today. For each child under 16, the government pays \$6 or \$8 a month, according to the child's age. Under the terms of another act passed in 1964, that is the Youth Allowances Act, young people between 16 and 18 who are still going to school get \$10 a month.

I wish to point out that since 1945, the allowances have hardly increased, whereas the cost of living went up sharply. As a matter of fact, between 1945 and 1965, the cost of living jumped by 87.7 per cent whereas family allowances increased by 9.4 per cent only.

Is it necessary to recall that in 1945, milk cost 8 cents a quart and bread 10 cents a loaf? We know that today, just to give a few examples, the price of milk has tripled and the price of bread has more than doubled. Those are undeniable facts.

Moreover, since 1945, our economic growth and our national production have increased considerably. Production increased not only in value but in volume and quantity.

I realize that each year the central government allocates huge amounts for family allowances. Thus, in 1965, Ottawa spent \$550,571,248 for 6,849,095 Canadian children. We also know that since the fiscal year 1957-58 Quebec is no more the province which draws more allowances in this field, but Ontario.

If Ottawa already spends large sums in family allowances, one must not conclude that its contribution is sufficient. On the contrary, this question must be discussed considering not only the high cost of living but the families' limited income and acute needs.

I am thinking, for instance, of the situation of Quebec families. Mr. Jacques Henripin, a demographer and University of Montreal professor, drew the following outline in a lecture he delivered in November 1965 to the Family Social Services Federation congress:

Out of the 994,000 non-farm families, 18 per cent have an income lower than \$2,500; 24 per cent have an income between \$2,500 and \$4,000; 29 per cent are in the \$4,000-\$6,000 bracket; and the remaining 29 per cent have an income higher than \$6,000.