

can readily appreciate the effect of such a policy. True, by this law which was passed in 1944, the citizens of Canada are paying for the allowances; but in reality what they are paying for is the prosperity of the country. It is the best law that any government has ever enacted. If we want prosperity in the country we must have it first in the family. Fine children mean better men for tomorrow, and better men mean a finer country.

Hon. Norman Paterson: Honourable senators, I feel that I have some information pertaining to this bill which will be of interest to you. As you know, I am president of the Victorian Order of Nurses. This order has in Canada 486 nurses, who make a million calls a year; which for the most part have to do with the care of children and expectant mothers.

The honourable member from Blaine Lake (Hon. Mr. Horner) speaks often of the rugged independence of the people of his generation. I have a great deal of sympathy with what he says, for I was brought up in the West and do not wish to deprive the rugged western farmer of his independence. But when one receives reports such as I do of the improvement in the health of children, the amount of milk they consume, and the dental work which is going into their mouths—all as the result of family allowances—one cannot overlook the great benefit of this law.

Hon. J. J. Kinley: Honourable senators, as an enthusiastic supporter of the family allowance legislation when it was introduced in the other house, I crave your indulgence while I say a word or two about the proposed amendment.

The family allowance system had been working before the bill was passed in parliament. Our income tax scheme accepted the principle, and income taxpayers received an allowance for each dependent child. The inequity under this system was that those who earned enough to be taxable got the benefit of the allowance, but those who earned less received no benefit whatever.

As a member of parliament representing much of the fishing population in the province of Nova Scotia, I felt that the children of the poor families should receive the same consideration as those of more prosperous families. As I travelled through my constituency and visited the homes of fishermen in the low income bracket, it seemed to me that the mother who raised the children was doing a noble duty to the state. I felt, therefore, that the principle adopted by the income tax department should be made to apply to all.

Family allowances are now paid to all citizens of Canada with children, regardless of income. It costs the country a good deal of money; but it is not lost, it is only distributed.

The people who get this money need it and cannot save it, so it goes into circulation. Those who want to increase their business will find that, with more money in the pool, people have more to spend. Men in poor circumstances will be better able to pay the doctor and the grocer, and to do things which formerly were beyond their means. Those of us who have associated with fishermen and other persons in the low income groups know how beneficial this legislation has been to the youth of Canada, who, after all, are perhaps the country's greatest asset. We are told today that the northern nations are raising such small families that they will soon be overwhelmed by people from more populous oriental countries.

It was suggested by the honourable member who moved second reading that the allowance should be the same for every child. It seems to me that more should be paid for the second child, than for the first, and more for the tenth child than for any of the others. I believe that would be a more reasonable change than to reduce the allowance because of numbers. However that may be, the law as originally passed was largely experimental. It is now amended in a manner that I think will be valuable; and probably as time goes on, family allowances will receive further consideration from the point of view of an equitable redistribution of wealth.

I believe that one of the things of which we can be proud is that Canada—not through the provinces but by the Dominion government—has established family allowances. Last fall, when I was in Newfoundland, I was told that this measure was not without substantial influence upon the thinking of the people with respect to confederation. Reflecting on the circumstances of many of Newfoundland's people who live along the coast and are in low income brackets, but who toil hard and give useful service to the country, one may suppose that they decided that family allowances would do them a lot of good, and that as Canadian citizens they would attain a higher economic standard.

I do not approve of getting something for nothing; I believe we should merit what we receive and that we should try to earn our living by the sweat of our brow. But let us not forget that the woman who raises a family, and the man engaged in a useful occupation which may not yield a large return, deserve that their children shall have a fair chance. For the privilege of serving them in this way we are thankful, and I am glad to support the amendment which is now before the house.

Hon. Gustave Lacasse: I want to add a word or two to keep the record absolutely clear and not invite any misinterpretation. I