

Family Income Security Plan

erty tax on farm buildings and farm house, insurance on buildings and equipment, livestock feed, grain seed for planting, twine and bags, pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer, repairs to buildings—100 per cent on farm buildings and 50 per cent on a farm house—and the capital cost of buildings and equipment. I could elaborate on some of these examples, Mr. Speaker, and in committee I will be prepared to do so in order to alleviate the fears of some hon. members.

Another objection taken to the legislation was the terrible administrative bureaucracy that it was alleged would be built up as a result. It is indeed strange to hear this type of argument being supported by the NDP who indicate that we should have more bureaucracy.

An hon. Member: Why?

Mr. Munro: Their policy is that government should move into more areas to assist people suffering injustices in our society. Nevertheless, strange as the objections may be, I think hon. members have greatly overestimated the administrative problems that will be encountered. I ask hon. members to compare this plan with the guaranteed income supplement for the aged. In that program we brought in selectivity. Benefits were based on the previous year's income. If during the current year the recipient of the guaranteed income supplement suffered a marked drop in income, he was given the option of going on the current year's basis so that his benefit level would increase and overcome that hardship.

• (1610)

Upward of one million of our 1,700,000 old age pensioners are receiving all or part of the guaranteed income supplement. They must file an income statement in the same way as is proposed in connection with the family income security plan. I ask hon. members present to say frankly how many complaints they have received regarding those applications. There have been some, but not many. Can any member of this House say that the approximately one million pensioners receiving the guaranteed income supplement do not welcome that payment even though there is an income test? They must make a statement in full, but do they not welcome the program? No investigators come around bothering them. The cheque is in an envelope and they can go to an impersonal bank and cash it; therefore there is no humiliation connected with it. Do our approximately one million old age pensioners not welcome these payments, for all these reasons?

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

Mr. Orlikow: No, Mr. Speaker; I rise to ask a question.

Mr. Munro: Can any hon. member say that many of those one million Canadians have complained about being humiliated? In their objections, hon. members opposite have made excessive statements about this particular policy. The program we are considering will be administered in the same way. There will be many variations in payments just as there are variations in the cheques that go out for the guaranteed income supplement. Under this

[Mr. Munro.]

program the size of the cheque will vary according to the number of children, the income level of the family and the ages of the children; so that even when a cheque is cashed, anybody else watching will have no idea of the income level of the family.

Objections along these lines entirely ignore the functioning of our banking system in many urban areas. One can simply cash a cheque by signing it and presenting it at the bank where it can be paid into an account. The gross exaggeration in terms of what will happen in the administration of this program is merely another device hon. members opposite are using to distract the attention of this House and the citizens of Canada from what is at issue. Those exaggerations are a form of blatant cynicism and an attempt to manipulate the opinion of a group in Canada that is not greedy, the middle income group. Hon. members will soon discover the truth once this legislation is passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Some hon. members wished to ask the minister questions and he agreed to accept them. The Chair recognizes, first, the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather).

Mr. Fairweather: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for accepting my question and I apologize for interrupting him. The question I wish to ask is one of great seriousness. Does the minister not realize that family allowance moneys paid to children in foster homes, institutions and otherwise outside the normal family structure are used, as one might put it, to pay for extras such as school supplies, clothing and other supplies for children who in ordinary circumstances get a very meagre shake in life? That is what bothers me so much about clause 6(2). In many cases the money is used to help these children get a start in life and takes the place of help otherwise provided by parents. Can the minister see his way clear to changing this aspect of the bill?

An hon. Member: Through amendments?

Mr. Fairweather: The hon. member will have to wait for the amendments that will be brought forward in committee.

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to answer the question. May I say that I realize the significance of what the hon. member has said. Rightly or wrongly, in this legislation we are providing maximum benefits for children of families receiving social assistance who are not being raised in an institutional setting. We are trying to equate equally benefits received by children in families and by children in institutions. Since we are already sharing with the provinces half the cost of operating many of these institutions—

An hon. Member: But those are different payments.

Mr. Munro: I am trying to explain in a rough way the rationale behind the bill. I believe the hon. member who asked the question, or a colleague of his received a communication from the minister responsible for social welfare in New Brunswick. I am perfectly willing to look at this matter again in committee and see if some better formula cannot be worked out.