

*Family Allowances*

problems of the Canadian family. As Mr. Philippe Garigue once said—and I should like to conclude with these words—the fact remains that the real purpose of a family policy, and therefore of an integrated family allowance policy, is not only the promotion of the family but, through the family, the development of a better human society more in keeping with the goals of man.

**An hon. Member:** The just society.

● (1640)

**Mr. Marcel Roy (Laval):** Mr. Speaker, changing one's mind may be better than changing parties, but the question is this: The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe said that provincial governments were closer to the people; I wonder if he knows that federal policies benefit the people from the cradle until the last old age security pension cheque, that some are related to housing and others are designed to pay 50 per cent of the entire cost of welfare programs. Therefore, I should like to know if he was aware of the federal government's contributions, which is in closer contact with the people, even more than provincial governments.

**Mr. Wagner:** Mr. Speaker, I recognize that I was aware of this, but I should like to point out to the hon. member that municipal governments are normally closer to their people than provincial governments, which in turn are closer to the people than the federal government and that accordingly, the outgoing governments, both at the federal level and in the province of Quebec, are very far from the people under their jurisdiction.

[English]

**Mr. Hugh Poulin (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, rising as I do having heard the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner), and having read in *Hansard* the speech given yesterday by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), it seems to me that these two speeches embody the thinking of each of their respective parties. It seems that both parties are attempting to take credit for this bill; in fact, both are claiming paternity of the new baby bonus. I think I can say to the minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, that this indicates the most excellent quality of the bill and of its provisions for Canadians and Canadian families.

It is interesting to note that when the government prepared its Speech from the Throne it made provision for the increases that we now see in this bill. Let there be no doubt that this was a Liberal policy brought forth by this Liberal government, consistent with the original plan in the Speech from the Throne, and that it follows Liberal thought going back many years, from the inception of family allowances in 1944 to the increases that we see today.

The bill provides initially that there shall be paid out of a consolidated revenue fund for each month a family allowance of \$20 or such greater amount as may be determined from time to time. Further, there is a provision in clause 13 to take into account changes in consumer price levels occurring after the commencement of this legislation. This is but another of the constructive, and I say positive, measures being taken by this government to ensure greater security for Canadians.

[Mr. Wagner.]

The central theme of this government's philosophy is both respect for the individual and for individual freedom. Recent government policy has largely been oriented towards providing the conditions, economic and social, for realizing this aspect, not in some theoretical framework, but in everyday life, for as many people as possible. This is not an easy task. The views of the young, the old, the rich, the poor, the labour unionist, the consumer, the retailer, or any of the multiplicity of groups which comprise Canadian society, all have the right to be heard. All have demands which frequently are conflicting. One of modern government's crucial roles is to determine to what extent the state can meet these various demands, given available resources and the existing values within society, without creating severe conflict.

I believe that Canadians expect to provide for their own needs through their own efforts and that they expect others to do the same. We believe that each of us should contribute, to the extent of our individual ability, to the support and well-being of our own families and to be of assistance to those who cannot help themselves.

We also believe that we have a responsibility to help our fellow Canadians. As the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) stated in his speech yesterday, the provisions incorporated in this bill will supplement the income of Canadian families and improve their capacity to meet the cost of raising children. The bill will provide three and a half million Canadian families, most of whom are on low or middle income, with a net additional disposable income of \$840 million. The family unit is still, and I trust will remain, the cornerstone of Canadian society. It is the family unit which bears the greatest burden brought on by the high cost of living and the increased pressures of inflation. In addition to the long range effects of aiding the integrity of the family unit, the provisions of this bill increasing family allowances will immediately provide much needed assistance to families on low or middle incomes to meet the increased cost of food, clothing and shelter.

This is but another example of the measures continually being taken by this government, as outlined in the Speech from the Throne, to provide for the needs of Canadians. Basic old age pensions have been increased by 15 per cent. With guaranteed income supplements, single persons will receive a maximum of \$170 and couples will receive \$325. War veterans allowances have been increased by 13 to 15 per cent. Disabled war veterans allowances were increased by 25 per cent. The government has ensured that Canadians continue to maintain adequate incomes by providing for increases in these programs to reflect changes in the cost of living.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member is being distracted perhaps by conversations in the chamber. I ask that the hon. member be accorded the usual courtesy.

**Mr. Poulin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition, personal income tax rates will be adjusted commencing in 1974 to reflect the cost of living changes. Since January of this year the government has taken necessary and decisive action to protect families with regard to the most basic and essential items of life, that is, food, clothing and shelter. Many of these actions have been taken even