

Family Allowances Act

try. He has washed his hands of the support for families that has been a hallmark of the Liberal Government in the past.

How much does it cost to raise a family? No one is suggesting that the sums we receive from family allowance, the tax exemptions and child tax credits, even minimally support a family. According to the figures used by the Children's Aid Society in providing support for foster parents, and statistics dating back to 1984, it costs over \$100,000 to raise a child from birth to 18 years of age. According to the Metropolitan Toronto Social Planning and Research Council, it costs over \$100,000 to supply the bare minimum in food, clothing and education for that same child. This does not take into account post-secondary education or luxuries.

Many women in Canada have welcomed that family allowance cheque and the support which Government provides for families. Two income families, such as a steel working family in my riding earning \$30,000 a year, are not living in the lap of luxury. Rather than asking whether we should be cutting back from those families, we should consider whether a single income family should be paying the same taxes as a single person who is earning \$30,000. Having been single myself, not supporting a family, I would suggest that I should pay a greater burden of the Canadian tax share than a man or woman who is supporting two, three or four children.

A basic principle of Canadian political life and Canadian social sovereignty has been that families be given support. That support has taken various forms, such as family allowance which is paid directly to mothers, tax credits paid directly to mothers and through the tax system indirectly in order to provide support for families.

[*Translation*]

But now, Mr. Speaker, once and for all we see the true colours of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. They are the real "blues" who cold-bloodedly work for the rich. They easily managed to come up with thousands and thousands or even a billion dollars—I am not sure I have it quite right in French but I think you know what I mean. They could find money for the banks, just like that. It does not matter—

Mrs. Killens: One billion.

Ms. Copps: One billion . . . It matters little to Canadians that you can come up with \$1 billion for the bank, but can you not find any money at all for the families? Now that is really something, they easily found \$1 billion for the banks without even asking for collateral, without any real guarantee that the bank will—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry but the Hon. Member's time has expired.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member referred to single parents. Could she provide the House with specific figures that will directly show the impact of this deindexation on single families headed by mothers? There are some single

males raising families but these single-parent families are primarily headed by females. Would the Hon. Member add to her already fine contribution?

Ms. Copps: I could provide some statistics that were gathered by the Liberal Party but I am sure the Government would immediately disavow these statistics. Let me refer to the documentation that was placed before us by the Canadian Council on Social Development. When considering single families headed by mothers, a yearly income of \$15,000 would be higher rather than lower than average. However, according to these statistics, as a direct result of these Budget measures, a single parent family earning \$15,000 a year will see a reduction of almost \$2,000 in the moneys that it receives directly and indirectly from the federal Government.

In other words, by 1989 its purchasing power will be reduced by almost \$2,000 through direct sales taxes as well as an indirect reduction in tax exemptions that will take effect in the latter part of the Budget.

What makes this Budget particularly insidious is the fact that the short-term effect of the provisions being implemented by the Minister of National Health and Welfare appear to be good. It appears that the family allowance cheque will be slightly increased for those families in need. Unfortunately, the cold reality of the Conservative Party's fiscal policy will hit those people between the teeth in 1989 when they see a net reduction of their purchasing power of almost \$2,000.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Debate.

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, today we are examining a Bill to deindex the family allowance. This is part of a Government plan that we disapprove of profoundly. It is a plan to redistribute income from lower and middle income Canadians to wealthier individuals. It is part of a plan that the Government has obviously instituted in its Budget.

The Government still uses the rhetoric of compassion and support of the welfare state. However, the measures throughout the Budget are ones from which lower and middle income Canadians will suffer particularly.

The measure before us to deindex family allowance by 3 per cent a year is, of course, very similar to the measure that the Government introduced for the deindexing of old age pensions. I am pleased to say that we persuaded it not to take that action. Millions of Canadians protested the deindexing of old age pensions.

● (1530)

It was for precisely the same reason for which people objected to that deindexation that I want to address the subject of the deindexing of the family allowance. These programs are universal social programs which have been developed over the years for which the CCF, the founder of the NDP, fought for decades. They were finally instituted by Liberal Governments after a great deal of prodding. Yet the principle of universality was one never very firmly held by the