

*Family Income Security Plan*

arrangement under which Quebec could alter the scheme provided it did not claim more federal money than would otherwise be available. Another condition is that for any province to do this, the province would have to spend an amount equal to 15 per cent of the total amount spent in this area.

I recognize the growing strength and responsibility of the provinces, but it is interesting that so far as I can ascertain none of the other nine provinces wants this kind of arrangement. None of the other nine provinces wants to have a say as to how the money will be distributed if that would mean they would have to pay additional money. Therefore, I think this proposal has to be looked at carefully, and we should take this look when we go into committee.

If there is a desire on the part of the government to provide special status in this area for the province of Quebec, then I would not object to it, but say so. In effect, that is what we did with the Canada Pension Plan; we drew up the legislation so that any province could set up its own plan, at the same time knowing that Quebec was the only province that was going to do that. It was a special status arrangement which has worked out very well. If that is what is wanted in this case, then I suggest the arrangement be called that, not an arrangement for all the provinces, the government knowing that the other nine provinces are not interested in such an arrangement.

I make that brief comment about the matter because, as I say, the minister said nothing about it today. But the Prime Minister in his letter to the Prime Minister of Quebec did say that if they reached agreement on what should be done to provide for provincial participation, that matter could be dealt with when the bill was being considered by Parliament.

At this point I shall conclude my remarks. As one who, with other members, was here in 1944 when this legislation was first brought in, I am delighted to be here in the House when the amounts under the legislation are being raised, not by as much as I should have liked to see but nevertheless raised by a number of dollars. However, I am very sorry that the basic principle of universality, the principle that we are all together in this, is being dropped by the government. I think this step is wrong and that it should be looked at very carefully.

On this basis, the position that I am going to take on this legislation is that we should look at it further. We are therefore prepared, when the times comes, to give it second reading and to send it to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs. However, there will have to be a lot of improvement made to the bill as well as some effort to restore the basic principle that I think was so important to family allowances before we can be satisfied with the bill in its final form.

I see, Mr. Speaker, that you are getting up, so I shall sit down. I simply say again that I think the government of Canada was right with regard to the original concept of old age security and family allowances and that the present government, in reversing that decision, is wrong. Those of us who are trying to advance the idea of universality, of a country in which we are Canadians all, are not looking backward but are looking forward to the kind of Canada of which we can all be proud.

• (1530)

[Translation]

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I want to participate in the debate on Bill C-170 which promises to be highly interesting. The bill is entitled: "An Act to provide for the payment of benefits in respect of children." Thus, it provides for payments for those who have dependent children.

First of all I should like to subscribe to the remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) at the beginning of this speech when he recalled the history of legislation authorizing payment of family allowances. They highly interested me.

I remember that during the depression years in Canada, from 1939 to 1940, agencies concerned with the plight of the people called on the government to pass legislation for the payment of allowances to Canadian families. I also remember that at the time short-sighted people denounced the views put forward by agencies or their representatives, accusing them of proclaiming a communistic concept. They claimed that this would mean handing out money to families without their having earned it directly as a salary. In their view, this would incite people to sloth.

Well, it has since been seen that family allowances did not have the results anticipated, that life continued quite normally and that those who were lazy remained lazy and those who were hard-working continued being so.

During a recent debate, I was surprised to hear hon. members, both Liberals and Progressive Conservatives, accusing each other of having done too little in the field of social security.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that in politics it is perhaps quite normal to try to stress that greater progress was achieved during the time one was in power than during the time the other party was in power. However, I believe that we should ask ourselves whether Canada, from an economic standpoint, can do more to acknowledge the rights of the Canadian family.

In a speech he made recently the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) said that Canada is the most advanced country in the field of social security. So much the better, if it is true that the Providence has given us untold resources and if it is true that Canadians can develop and transform them in the best interest of the people.

Mr. Speaker, as for me, I believe that the family is the very basis of our society, that it is the family that provides the most important thing in this country, human capital. Therefore if the family assumes such a responsibility, I believe it behooves the State to recognize those rights in a better way, to enable it to fulfil its ideals by providing it with the financial means needed for a decent way of life.

Indeed, why do we live in a society? I believe we do not ask ourselves enough questions about that and I think our young ones, would like to benefit from life in society without thinking as much as they should about the reason why people live in society.

On the other hand, we have rights but we also have responsibilities. And even if it is not practical, from the