

*Family Allowances Act, 1973*

such savings necessary. I clearly remember the public reaction to his statement. Even the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin), if I am not mistaken, was reluctant to make such cuts. At any rate, the people were really worried. Maybe the intention was to get feedbacks through this particular Minister. When they got it, it took two cabinet meetings for them to decide against slashing social programs.

I would also like to state that I very patiently listened to the Minister of National Health and Welfare winding her way around telling us that the legislation would not make much difference as it involves only as little as \$4 to a maximum of \$54. What she says boils down to this: We need not object so much, we need not worry. The whole thing amounts to \$4, \$8 or \$54 at the most. But although she stated she was very comfortable in introducing the legislation, I have a feeling she is not so comfortable with Bill C-131, and quite understandably. I, for one, refuse to accept that the Government dump the cost of its mismanagement, the wrong courses it has taken, on the most helpless groups in our society. Today, naturally, no reference was made to the wrong decisions that may have been taken. Simply, they look to the future and say: Well, things are fouling up elsewhere, and so are they in Canada, and the Government, of course, is not to be blamed, everyone else, so to speak is except this administration that has been here for the last 15 years.

The Minister states there will not be much change, but finally had to admit that sacrifices will have to be made by everyone including mothers and children who are not responsible for this Government's wrong decisions and mismanagement. If the Bill really changes nothing, why ask some Canadian mothers and families, in significant number to accept self-denial to pull the country out of its present mess? This country, as the Minister remarked, is in a rut and she wants mothers to make sacrifices which may be minor as far as this legislation is concerned, but which are very heavy in the case of senior citizens. And this Government does not only appeal to senior citizens and mothers, and finally children, to bear the brunt of a situation they did not create, it will force their co-operation willy nilly. So if the Minister is so eager to have mothers join in the national drive for sacrifices, it is because they are bound to lose something. I suggest this is indecent, it is unacceptable that the Minister should call on Canadian mothers to suffer the consequences of a mismanagement they are not responsible for. This is why I object to the principle of making those families, mothers and senior citizens pay for this Government's errors. I believe there is no one in this House so lacking in compassion as to accept with equanimity that helpless innocents be forced to shoulder the problems Canada is now facing. And we are asked, without any hesitation to co-operate with a Government which is leading us into bankruptcy. We are asked to co-operate with a Government which has made but the wrong choices, especially these last few months. How could we be willing to co-operate with a Government which is responsible for Canada's current situation? If only as

a matter of principle, I would reply by a firm no if a Minister or the Government were to ask me to support this Government's mismanagement with which we have been forced to live for so many years and for which it is mostly to blame. I do not want to waste the time of this House, Mr. Speaker, but I want to say that when a group has to pay even an insignificant amount—because while it is true, as the Minister said earlier, that the Bill does not represent a major change since it is simply changing four quarters for a dollar, as we say in Quebec, the principle remains the same whether we are speaking about four dollars or \$50—when people who are certainly not responsible for this situation are asked to partly assume this responsibility for this Government's mismanagement and these people are certainly in no position to pay, I believe—

**Miss Bégin:** With \$38,000, they cannot pay this?

**Mr. La Salle:**—even if it is \$4, for people with children who earn under \$26,000—

**Miss Bégin:** They cannot pay with an income of \$38,000?

**Mr. La Salle:** The Minister is absolutely certain that they are able to pay. However, one thing is certain, the Canadian people know they will have to pay because the Government has no compassion for those affected by the legislation now under consideration, and I hope that I shall have the opportunity later to speak about Bill C-131 concerning senior citizens, who will certainly be affected. But the Minister has found a formula to shuffle \$18 in here, \$36 in there, to come up with \$50 and say that after all this shuffling, the families involved will not have much to pay. However, the Minister has spoken about a sacrifice, therefore it implicitly means a loss. The Government is dealing severely with people who are not responsible and who should not be left holding the baby. And the Government could not care less who is going to suffer, whether they be mothers, children or senior citizens, all will have to pay for its failure. That is what I had to say, Mr. Speaker, and that is also why I shall vote against this bill, because I feel very strongly that some people who can hardly afford to pay are being squeezed by the Government. The Minister may feel differently, but it is not the first time I have to deal with the Government Members opposite. But the fact is that it is my duty to tell the Government that it is not only damaging the country as a whole, but is directly attacking people who deserve more compassion than they are getting today.

• (1720)

[English]

**Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West):** Madam Speaker, let me first consider the basic provisions of Bill C-132, which amends the Family Allowance Act. The purpose and sole reason for this legislative action is the implementation of the Government's infamous six and five restraint policy. We are