

*Family Allowances Act, 1973*

surprised at the lack of force with which they are fighting this Bill.

• (1730)

I saw the Conservatives stand up and protect the rights of the multinational corporations, and the bells in this House rang for 15 days. They made horrendous noises about how dictatorial the legislation before us was, and in fact made some improvement in terms of having a very massive energy Bill split up because of their determination to protect the profits of their friends in the oil industry. Certainly, that is something which they can use this House to do, and they did it well. I saw last week similar actions to protect the agribusiness in Canada under Canagrex, and through points of privilege the Conservative Party was able to delay and waste two days of the time of the House. I hardly see the same kind of determination on Bills C-131, C-132 or C-133, which Bills they are supposedly opposing, but really they are not making any concerned effort to support those witnesses who came before committee to indicate what the damage to the recipients of Family Allowances, old age pensions and superannuates' pensions would be. I do not see the same determination from the Conservative Party regarding that. They are giving some lip service to supporting universality of these programs, however, they are really not too serious about it. Their position, I think, was adequately indicated on Bill C-124 on Public Service wages and in their eagerness to have those capped at six and five. Therefore, I do not think they are really fooling anyone in this Party as to their real motives on these particular Bills.

The Family Allowances which goes to mothers is used by them to provide for young children, whether in the form of food or clothing, or maybe even to provide their children with some social experience they would otherwise not be able to have. I think it is important that children in our country be not only well fed, well clothed and well sheltered, but it is important for them to have some experiences, whether cultural or recreational in terms of sports or arts and crafts. Mothers should be able to have within their own income some access to money to provide an opportunity to take their children to swimming lessons, or art lessons outside of school, and to provide those kinds of experiences which children of parents with higher incomes accept as something natural in their homes. That is not always true of low-income families. It is certainly not true of single-parent families where mothers, if they are working, are normally not in highly paid occupations and have to scrape any kinds of money they can together to provide for their children. The principle of universality in Family Allowances is something that we in this House of Commons should not have to be debating. It should be sacrosanct. The mother's allowance, which is basically the only income she has in many cases, goes to the upbringing of her children.

I would just say, Mr. Speaker, that I will be very pleased to stand up and vote against Bill C-132. I will be supporting the amendment that is before us, although I am not enamoured

with it or its intentions, or its eventual contribution if, indeed, accepted, but at this time the Government has an opportunity to change its mind on Bill C-132. It is not a Bill which is going to gain a great deal of revenue for the Government, but it is going to do irreparable harm to the principle of universality and it jeopardizes the whole concept of universality, not only for Family Allowances, but for pensions. And if the Government gets away with the Bill before us now, there is nothing to stop it from whittling away at other social programs and cutting back on expenditures just at a time when this society needs these programs to support families, senior citizens and all Canadians. I would implore the Government to reconsider what it is about to do under Bill C-132.

**Mr. D. M. Collette (York East):** Mr. Speaker, it had not been my intention to speak this afternoon.

**An Hon. Member:** Filibuster.

**Mr. Collette:** I notice that the Hon. Members of the New Democratic Party are charging me with being part of a filibuster, but we have just listened to three or four NDP Members in a row. It had not been my intention to speak, but after listening to such gall and hypocrisy from the NDP I felt compelled to get on my feet.

**Mr. Smith:** The truth must come out.

**Mr. Collette:** We are prepared to vote on this measure, Mr. Speaker. We are prepared to vote on it before six o'clock. We are prepared to vote on it at eight o'clock. But, obviously, the NDP is trying to prolong matters.

**An Hon. Member:** Of course we are.

**Mr. Collette:** They are force-feeding Canadians with a lot of drivel, and it is time someone got up and refuted it, and I hope some of my colleagues will do the same, if they persist this evening. First of all, we have had the allegorical meanderings of people like the Hon. Member for Saskatoon East (Mr. Ogle) and the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) going back to Dickensian England. To compare Dickensian England with Canada today is absolute nonsense. In Dickensian England they did not have universal medicare. They did not have universal old age pensions or family benefits. They did not have a generous system of unemployment insurance benefits.

**An Hon. Member:** They did not have Liberals, either.

**Mr. Collette:** I am waiting for the Hon. Members of the NDP to start talking about poor houses and forced labour, and the chimney sweep going down the chimneys at the age of eight. This is what they are trying to sell Canadians on.

**Mr. Nielsen:** You will get us there.

**Mr. Collette:** What they are trying to sell Canadians on, Mr. Speaker, is that conditions in Canada are much worse than they really are. We have a serious economic crisis. We have real problems in this country. But for the Opposition Parties to use such hysteria, such hyperbole, as they are doing