

Family Allowances Act, 1973

upper income earners to pay more than their fair share; we are simply asking them to pay something. Right now hundreds and hundreds of Canadians earning over \$100,000 a year pay not one single penny in tax. If we tax those few folks in our society, the Government would not have to rip the money out of the hands of Canada's children, presumably to save some money.

That is not the only reason we in the New Democratic Party find it very difficult to support this legislation. We find it impossible to support this legislation because of its unfair nature. The six and five program is unquestionably unfair. We have heard Members opposite stand in their places saying: "We are all in this together. All Canadians are capping their incomes to 6 per cent. All civil servants are capping their incomes to 6 per cent. Even Cabinet Ministers' incomes being capped." If you stop to think, Mr. Speaker, even capping a Minister's salary at 6 per cent will still mean a \$5,400 increase. Can you imagine what the mothers of Canada would think and how they would react if they were told they were going to get a \$5,000 increase as a result of this Government's program? Canadian mothers would be leaping with delight.

Let us look at a few other folks who I find a little more interesting. We have heard some of the corporate heads of Canadian companies say that they like the six and five program. They like the idea of imposing the six and five program on the mothers of Canada, on federal civil servants and people working for CN or Air Canada. We hear them say that they are overpaid anyway. Look at who is saying that.

Mr. Benjamin: It is the blue ribbon boys.

Mr. Riis: One of them is Mr. Bronfman. In 1981 he was Chairman of Seagram's. When he caps his income next year he will only get an increase of \$60,000. What about the President of Seagram's Mr. Griffin? By capping his income next year, he will only get an increase of \$48,000. What about Mr. Tebbs, Senior Vice-President of Hiram Walker? When his income is capped next year, he will only get a \$46,000 increase. We can go down the list. Mr. Ian Sinclair is the Chairman of the Board of Canadian Pacific Enterprises. When his income is capped next year he will get a paltry \$35,000 increase. Here is a man who is running across the country saying: "Folks, we have a great idea; enjoy the 6 per cent imposition because we are all in this together".

Whether you are a mother who depends on the Family Allowance cheque to make ends meet at the end of the month, or whether you are Mr. Bronfman making well in excess of \$1 million a year, we hear it said: "We are all in this together". That may be. We may all be in this together, but there is certainly no fairness, no equity and no justice in the system as it is implemented. That is why we in the New Democratic Party have opposed this six and five concept since the beginning, and we certainly oppose this Bill.

What about our friends to the right? I remember distinctly that last August the Government brought in Bill C-124, which imposed the six and five program on every aspect of the federal Government system. Who voted in favour of that? The Liberal Party representatives here and the Progressive Conservative representatives in the House of Commons. The only Party who saw the unjust nature of the six and five program was the New Democratic Party and, to be fair, a handful of Tories. But today, the Progressive Conservatives rise in their places and condemn this program. They cannot work both sides of the street at the same time, Mr. Speaker. They have to make up their minds. Either they are for or against it.

• (1420)

I suspect that when Bill C-133 comes before the House, those same Members will rise to their feet to call it unjust and unfair, when they are the ones who voted for the six and five program.

One can elaborate at great length on the details of the Bill. Bill C-132 will result in less income being received by the young people of Canada. Mothers will receive a \$50 increase in Child Tax Credit for each of their children for the entire year of 1983, which means an additional \$34 over what they would normally receive for each child. They will receive \$35 less for each child in 1984. In 1985 they will receive \$38 less. In 1986 they will receive \$41 less. This trend will just continue.

A more serious consequence concerns the effect this Bill will have on the future generations of mothers and children in this country. When these programs return to full indexing in two or three years, the base on which that full indexing will take place will have been eroded. The implication of this program is that the children and the old age pensioners of this country, for the rest of its history, will receive less income from the Family Allowance Program and the old age pension. The base on which the calculations of these payments is made has been eroded. This causes great concern to some of us in the House, particularly those in the NDP who are committed to the concept of universality.

We wonder whether this is just not the foot in the door to abandoning that principle. I distinctly recall that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), who is a former Minister of National Health and Welfare, stated on November 3 that the Government of Canada may end the universality of Family Allowances. Despite what the present Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) says, the Minister of Finance unquestionably made these remarks. He will be bringing in a new budget in the months ahead and the Government will be making a Throne speech. Knowing the Minister of Finance's position in Cabinet, I suspect that his remarks should serve as notice to Canadians that the Government is seriously considering abandoning this very basic principle.