

Family Income Security Plan

involves a considerable increase in disbursements and visible expenses. These excessive payments would create a whole series of reimbursement problems.

• (2120)

The recovery of overpaid benefits will unfortunately distort the relation between benefits and needs at the time of recovery.

Universality, Mr. Speaker, engenders excessive diversion of money to the benefit of families that are not poor. According to a recent survey on family and youth allowance programs, only 25 per cent of payments under those programs are paid to families whose income is under \$5,000. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a shameful situation. I believe it has lasted long enough and the government precisely wishes to correct it so that from now on Canadian families earning less than \$5,000 may receive family allowances, at least 75 per cent of the money spent for that purpose.

Now the opposition parties' proposal aims precisely at perpetuating that shameful situation. Their objections to the bill as drafted seem unacceptable to me. Their habit, Mr. Speaker—and I cannot help mentioning it—of always unduly prolonging the work of this House through unending and useless debates is unacceptable. The two members who spoke before me tonight spoke for the second time during this debate; they both spoke on second reading and they just told us the same thing again. Only one of their speeches would have been enough, I think. The fact that opposition parties are perpetuating this debate shows how much they are afraid that the Canadian people may see this government proposal accepted and applied. They want to delay passage of that measure because they know it will benefit millions of Canadian families that need such a substantial increase in family allowances.

Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised at the attitude of the Progressive Conservatives who are against this bill. Their philosophy is such that they are devoted to the protection of the interests of the richest people in Canada. They have never accepted and will never accept that the steps taken be profitable to the smaller interests to the prejudice of the large ones they are protecting.

However, I should say that the position taken by the Social Credit surprises me enormously. The Social Credit party, through its representatives, has made several interventions in the House. Among others, the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe), who is here tonight, spoke on two occasions. When examining their interventions in the House, one can see that they have failed to understand this legislation, for each of their speeches contains five or six monumental errors that we will take care to explain in due course to their constituents. Their speeches in the House in no way reflect the feelings of their constituents. I had an opportunity to visit the ridings of those Social Credit members, and the large majority of their electors support the legislation introduced by us.

The people they represent is a rural population, comprising large families with low incomes. Now, the legislation that we are proposing today will considerably help those large families make both ends meet. Therefore, the position taken by the Social Credit members in the House is unspeakable and only shows that they are a gang of

[Mr. Ouellet.]

people unable to understand a bill. When opposing this one, they err considerably and we will make it a point to return in their ridings and explain to their electors that their Social Credit representatives were against higher family allowances.

I would like to go back to certain allegations made by members of the New Democratic Party to the effect that the tax system and the guaranteed family income supplement tend to favour the better off rather than the needy.

I wish to state, Mr. Speaker, that low income citizens will receive, within the framework of our new plan, vastly increased benefits due to the implementation of new exemptions provided for by the recent Income Tax Act. Moreover, their net income will increase. If we want to evaluate the impact of the government's program in relation to income, we must consider the changes that might affect net income, in other words, the amount of money available to a family for its expenses once benefits have been paid and taxes deducted and taking into account the relative importance of supplementary benefits in regard to current family income.

As regards the number of people who will actually benefit from this new plan, we would say that it is appreciable. Almost 70 per cent will receive maximum or partial benefits: 36 per cent will receive maximum benefits and 34 per cent partial benefits. Therefore, only 30 per cent of families will cease to receive benefits, that is families with an only child and earning around \$10,000, through and up to those whose income exceeds \$14,000, if they have ten children.

It is not true therefore, as some hon. members of the opposition have suggested, that this legislation will penalize families earning \$7,000, \$8,000 or \$9,000. I suggest that they have not understood this bill at all or that they deliberately want to mislead the people.

I would like to point out a statement made by the hon. member for Compton and tell him that it is absolutely false to pretend that a family with six or seven children and earning \$7,000 will not receive any benefits. Not only will it continue to receive them, but it will receive increased benefits.

The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) also made the same mistake in his speech of last Thursday on the same matter. This proves that members of the Social Credit party have not understood a thing about this bill or are deliberately trying to deceive the people.

The hon. member for Lotbinière, as shown at page 1479 of *Hansard*, gave the example of a head of a family who has eight children and who gets an income of \$8,000 per year. I quote:

His neighbour, another head of a family who lives on welfare, supports three children. The latter will get the maximum allowance.

But according to the member from Lotbinière, the first one will no longer get any allowance. Now, this is completely wrong.

An hon. Member: They are not educated.

An hon. Member: They do not know how to count.