

Family Allowances Act, 1973

child credit will continue to benefit from full indexing and, in addition, receive another \$50 in compensation for the next two years.

Canadians read this. They wrote us a lot of letters. They did not write silly letters but letters in support of our policy, whatever their family situation. The same applies to Bill C-131. We did not receive tons of mail, but we did get many letters which, in fact, I receive when I visit my own riding or when I visit other ridings in Canada to meet people in connection with my work—people who invite us for one reason or another. So I would like to ask the Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes) to stop urging our backbenchers to rebel against the Government, because it is of no use. These Members are very proud to see that inflation is going down. The truth is, none of them over there are listening. They are all busy going through their papers. It was quite a different story this morning, however—

• (1500)

[*English*]

He will not have the slightest success in appealing to the Liberal backbenchers to organize a revolt. They will not have it. Liberal backbenchers—

Mr. Nickerson: Do what they are told.

Miss Bégin:—are pretty pleased that we decided to mobilize all Canadians to fight inflation. They are pretty pleased and excited, as is every Cabinet Minister, to see that inflation in the last six months, since we started the six and five campaign as we call it, has decreased month after month. We are pretty pleased; it is fabulous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss Bégin: I have also studied social sciences, as did the Hon. Member for Calgary (Mr. Hawkes), and he should recognize the importance of the psychological element in any economic objective or goal. He should recognize that, and if he was “normal”, he would be happy. Why is he not happy to see inflation go down? I wish I understood that. Suddenly, with his Leader, he votes in favour of six and five, but when it comes to concrete application, he disappears in the woods. He is no longer there. Then he hates six and five. Can he explain to us the reason? I mean, does it take a Ph.D.? Where is the logic in all of that? I do not get it.

Unfortunately, you have to take the bitter pill when it is a bitter pill; it is not always a candy. You have to be in favour of six and five. You are in favour of it when it suits the bosses, but you do not seem to be in favour of it when it is more difficult to take one's responsibility and go and explain to Canadians that it also means that rich families will have to make a little effort as well. Where is the logic in that? I do not understand whom you represent. I do not understand who elected you. I do not understand how you have the guts to speak up publicly, because this measure gives more money to poor people, and you know it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss Bégin: I do not understand how you dare stand up and speak for at least 40 minutes—I would be very pleased if this

was a case where parliamentary reform was retroactive. You go on and on and on, frightening the poor families in the country, when this Bill C-139 will not only give them their full indexation on the Child Tax Credit, but another \$50. So what is your exact constituency? I do not understand, but I know Canadians. I know Canadian mothers. We all know Canadians on this side. I mean the every-day Canadian, the Canadian who does not want to continue with inflation. The mother whose budget every month is eroded. She is quite pleased to see the slight decrease in inflation month after month for six months, and we are very pleased.

I will finish with one plea, Mr. Speaker. I will ask our Members to defeat the amendment proposed by the Hon. Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes), and to go on with the work of bringing down inflation once and for all.

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak in favour of this amendment, although certainly against the Bill. It is a very short Bill with one clause and two sub-clauses, and only one sub-clause is involved in the amendment. But to address this, I think we have to look at the nature of the child support programs at the federal level. There are three direct support programs, and I suggest we consider them from the point of view of three principles. One is universality; another is the progressive or regressive nature as to whom the money goes to; the third is recognition of the role of parenting given by the different programs.

First of all let us consider the Family Allowance. This is the only universal program of the three child support programs at the federal level. It is one in which payment normally goes to the mother, in other words, to the prime parent, the person who is doing most of the work in raising children. That is very important. That is one of the reasons that women's organizations across the country have supported the Family Allowance, and indeed want it to be expanded, never mind being cut back. Since it is taxable, it is a progressive measure. It goes out universally, but there is a means of taxing it back from better off families. Indeed, that could be improved if we were concerned about measures of economy, but certainly we can respect the principle of universality and taxing back at the same time with this very important program.

The next one is the Child Tax Credit, Mr. Speaker. Supposedly it goes to the worst off families, although the cut-off point goes up to \$26,000 odd for the full-tax credit. It is a selective program and therefore does not have many of the benefits the universal programs do. It is also normally paid to the mother of the child, the prime parent, and for that reason it is a just and good program and something my Party would like to see expanded further.

Then there is the third program, and this is the one the Minister does not like to talk about. When she is pressed on it in committee, she still does not like to talk about it. That is, Mr. Speaker, the child tax deduction. This is not a universal program, it does not benefit everyone, and in fact it benefits most the richest families in the country. There is a lesser