

of certain private companies. (b) Company shareholdings; The Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly)—Fisheries—(a) Exercise of ministerial discretion—inspection of fish products; The Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi)—Multiculturalism—(a) Federal-Provincial Conference—size of Budget.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### FAMILY ALLOWANCES ACT, 1973

#### MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Epp (Provencher) that Bill C-70, an Act to amend the Family Allowances Act, 1973, be now read a second time and referred to a legislative committee, and on the amendment of Mr. Frith (p. 6625).

**Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West):** Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to participate in the debate on Bill C-70, which has the effect of deindexing family allowance benefits to the tune of \$55 million. It is out of sad necessity that I speak on this Bill. It is an obligation on this Member and certainly on Members of my Party to speak against another piece of regressive Tory legislation. This Bill has its roots in a Budget that one can characterize very accurately as a give and take Budget. It takes from the poor, the working class and middle class and gives to the rich and wealthy Canadians.

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, what does this Bill mean in real terms to the average Canadian? To better answer that question one cannot only look at the ambit of this particular Bill, one has to look at the number of measures introduced last May in the Conservative Budget. When you do that you see that by 1990, including changes to personal income tax and family benefits, a two-child family with both parents working with income in the neighbourhood of \$15,000 will lose about \$1,879 in purchasing power. Compare that to a family earning \$80,000 who will lose \$1,125. Even with this very quick arithmetic, we can see very clearly that low-income families will lose \$775 more per year than high-income families, and middle-income families will lose three times as much. Then consider the increase in consumer and gasoline taxes, the tax on health care products, and the removal of the RHOSP program which permitted young couples to put money aside to purchase their home. Then you get an idea of where this Tory Government is going.

As if that was not enough, the pre-Christmas debate was one which the Government wanted to use to open up the question of universality. Then prior to the summer recess we had the issue facing senior citizens of this country. This Government wanted to fight the battle of the deficit on the shoulders of our senior citizens. This month we see that senior citizens have been replaced by the mothers and children of this

country. To make matters worse, the Minister of Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) has moved for closure on this Bill. Is that because the Government is embarrassed to have Members of Parliament debate Bill C-70 further? Is it worried that Canadians will get agitated as they did in May and June to stop the regressive move of deindexing old age pensions? I recall hearing the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) talk about civility, parliamentary procedure, democracy, and the will of the people. Where are those words today? Where is the Prime Minister today with his great oratorical skills?

• (1700)

Those were not the only words uttered by the Prime Minister. In the Speech from the Throne it says, "My Government has a high priority measure to support and strengthen the Canadian family which is the cornerstone of our society". How do those words compare with the Bill before the House? The Minister of National Health and Welfare was not to be outdone by the rhetoric of the Prime Minister. He said, "It is the family and commitment to community which guarantees stability in our social fabric. It is my role to put forward signals and initiatives which will strengthen the role of the family and give it more prominence in society than I feel it has been given before".

Hon. Members on the other side were talking about hypocrisy. I ask them to look at the statements of the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Prime Minister. It does not take a genius to discover that there is a serious credibility gap between their words and their actions. Canadians no longer trust the Government. They no longer have any confidence in the Government's plan of action. Most importantly, Canadians will not allow the Government, despite its absolute parliamentary majority, to take them down a path they do not wish to travel. There is no better example of that than the actions of our senior citizens. The Government was prepared to deindex old age pensions. It made statements in the House and across the country that it would not back down. How long did it take for the Government to buckle under and listen to Canadians across the country? Canadians are facing another issue on the same principle, only this time senior citizens are being replaced with children and mothers.

The Government has been accused of lacking decisive leadership, and rightfully so. One can look at the banking fiasco, the broken promises, the on-again-off-again waltz with star wars, and the tuna fish issue. On those issues they did lack leadership. The only position that they are clear on is that of social security programs. The Government is comprised of a regressive group of men and women who are taking us backward rather than forward. The Government introduced a Budget which gives the wealthy tax breaks, loopholes, and a \$500,000 bonanza and asks senior citizens, mothers, and children of the country to bear the brunt of the financial situation that the Government finds itself in. They are being regressive rather than progressive as their Progressive Conservative label would suggest they should be.