

1979, \$6 million of it going to families in Nova Scotia who live below the poverty line right now. That, I think, is an advantage. Of course some of the wealthier families in the province will lose a bit every year, but we have kept family allowances and that is what I want to stress.

As to what measure of income we propose to use, I want to confirm that it is net income, the take-home pay. All the deductions the hon. member referred to will help bring back into the picture lots of families who make good money but who are not rich. As to the problem of the struggle of mothers versus fathers in the Canadian society of the future, who is going to get the cheque and the "tractations" which may take place within such families, I want to assure the hon. member that there will not be such a problem and that mothers can continue to receive the cheques without any disadvantage to the income tax position of the fathers. This is for the simple reason that the new child tax credit of \$200 a year per child will be non-taxable; it will not be declared on the father's income. It is a net benefit and it does not prejudice the other partner in terms of income tax.

We have taken the decision to send the cheque to the mothers in recognition of the present Canadian reality and in accordance with our long standing policy. In cases where fathers have the legal custody of children, fathers will receive the new child tax credit.

As to the last point made by the hon. member for South Western Nova about making the allowance in instalments more frequently than on an annual basis, we shall, of course, be monitoring the situation. I have spoken on that aspect on several occasions in the House. We shall welcome hearing the viewpoint of mothers on this question after the first year of the program's operation. Right now, there are pros and cons on both sides. While possession of a lump sum will have certain great advantages, it is true that there may be abuses by tax discounters. It might assist family budgeting if the credit were made available in several instalments. This is simply a matter of an administrative decision to be made in future years. We intend to monitor the situation carefully and may well recommend payment by several instalments in future years.

Mr. Macquarrie: Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that always when I begin a speech by saying I would like to "say a few words" I try to make it a declaration of intent rather than a rhetorical cliché. I say it now. It is a pleasure to be participating in this debate. I haven't heard all the speeches, but I have read them all and understood some of them. I have not been able until this week to be in the chamber this session except on Thursday and Friday, and when people say they have not seen me since God knows when, that is a reflection on their own attendance pattern. But it is not for me to go into that.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare was suggesting that the hon. member for Winnipeg North was really directing his remarks to people sitting right of him, and I want to remind her that I am sitting to his right and I did not need that kind of direction she made.

Miss Bégin: Then he was talking to the angels!

Family Allowances

Mr. Macquarrie: The score is, too, that I am sitting on his right, and to the left of most of my colleagues. If that be treason, then make the most of it, as Patrick Henry might have said if he were here.

I am pleased to be associated with a debate led in part by the Minister of Finance who is a man I have known for many years, a man of great charm and humour—and heading the portfolio he heads in the way he heads it, he needs a sense of humour. I am delighted he has one. I was impressed to read that he had declared this debate as one of the most significant social policy reforms in a decade. That is quite a sweeping statement. The minister, as I say, is a charming man, but if we ever had in this country a post similar to the oracle at Delphi I would suggest that he not even apply. I say this in terms of his prophetic record.

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Macquarrie: I was impressed by some concerns which have been raised by many of my colleagues in a matter which, in general, is one which looks pretty appealing. I think the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands and the hon. member for Egmont have still to get fulsome answers to the anxieties which they expressed with reference to certain very important matters. I was impressed too by the address by the new hon. member for Rosedale and by that of my colleague for St. John's East.

There seem to be some contradictory elements in this measure which mar our enthusiasm a bit. The lady minister is one of my favourite ministers in the whole cabinet. I cannot even hope to come close to the honourable, learned, and venerable member for Winnipeg North Centre who praised her so fulsomely, but if she would not consider it praising with faint damns or damning with faint praises I would say she is one of the most enlightened ministers of the particular group now in charge of our destinies.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The trouble is she is so lonely in that cabinet.

Mr. Macquarrie: The hon. member says she is lonely and I notice he goes over and talks with her every so often.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Macquarrie: But I, Mr. Chairman, am too young and too shy to go over and talk with good looking women.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Macquarrie: I admire him for doing so.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): You may find yourself there some day yourself.

Mr. Macquarrie: The thing that does appeal, of course—and no person with a social conscience would be too disturbed by this—is that basically we are trying to direct government assistance where it is most helpful. Someone long ago, who did not belong to this House, said, "To each according to his needs", and that is not a totally erroneous description of how