

Family Allowances Act

in mind three important considerations. First of all, as the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Applewhaite) mentioned, family allowances, or any other social benefits, were never intended to cover the complete cost of child maintenance. That is what any social benefit is, a contribution toward some form of maintenance. It cannot be anything else; and certainly if family allowances were intended to provide for full maintenance we would have to acknowledge at once that we had changed the character of our economic and social system. The second point to consider is that, without any increase in the amounts of benefit, family allowances this year will cost us \$332 million and some odd thousand. Third, each year there is an increase in the cost of this measure by some \$12 million.

Now, the house will no doubt agree that, in the face of the fact that we are engaged in a commitment to spend over \$2 billion for national defence, for preparations to preserve our way of life, together with other tremendous but I think responsible expenditures in the field of social welfare, and having in mind the universal demand that is made by hon. gentlemen opposite for a cut in taxation, it is hardly responsible at this time, in respect of this one measure, to make the proposal that has been made. If one were to calculate the suggestions for expenditures made on the other side, and place those alongside the charges that are being made against this government, I am sure that would be the greatest demonstration of lack of logic that the political life of Canada has ever witnessed.

Speaking immediately after the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Johnston), I want to say that I believe he overstated his case when he tried to suggest that this government was not concerned with the proper expenditure of money, that we were interested in defending extravagance. I hesitate to take issue with him because of the conciliatory attitude he took towards me personally, but as the first minister to speak after his observations I want to say that I am sure that, upon reflection, he would want to do a lot of editorializing on the remarks he has just made. On that point I suggest to him that the administration of family allowances is an indication of the concern not only of the department for which I am responsible but of the government for the proper administration and the wise expenditure of public moneys.

I have indicated that this year we will spend \$332 million in family allowances. When you consider the huge amount involved, it would not be unnatural to expect that we would be spending, by way of total administration costs, much more than is being

spent. Last year the Department of National Health and Welfare spent in the administration of this gigantic program less than \$2 million, specifically \$1,858,000; treasury spent \$2,627,335; public works, which looks after our ten regional offices, spent \$234,758. The whole administration cost of family allowances, administered by the federal government, was \$4,720,093. I doubt if you could find a better example of careful accounting and careful expenditure.

Mr. Johnston: I did not question that.

Mr. Martin: I know you did not, but I thought this would be a very good example to disprove what I thought was a very wide accusation and charge that the hon. member was making. Now, Mr. Speaker, the estimated expenditure on social security in Canada for the current fiscal year will be \$1,300 million.

Mr. Knowles: Is that federally or for all levels?

Mr. Martin: That is for all levels. The federal portion will be \$1,010,500,000; provincial, \$255,400,000; municipal, \$83,200,000. This makes a total for all governments of \$1,349 million. Those are figures that are in addition to the voluntary expenditures which are made but which, alongside the total of the government expenditures, represent a surprisingly small amount. One could give a further breakdown, but I would not want to tire the house. I simply give one example. In the matter of government health expenditures, which come within this category, the federal government on all counts, including the national health program and other departments of government as well as the Department of National Health and Welfare, will spend in the current fiscal year \$91,900,000; provincial governments will spend \$158,600,000, in respect of matters that are admittedly within their exclusive constitutional competence, and municipal governments will spend \$62 million. This makes a total of \$312,500,000. Approximately one-half of the total that goes for health care in Canada is already distributed by taxation across the whole population.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, that this very dry recital of the facts from our point of view will be a conclusive answer to the hon. gentleman who is proposing this resolution. It is not a denial of the validity of the principle. We believe in family allowances within our capacity and to the extent that we are able to meet other obligations. This suggestion has been made from other quarters of the house as well, and we should like to be able to accede to it at this time. For the