

*Family Allowances Act*

these comments instead of the Brian Bible—that poor families will lose \$22 in the first year.

I have another question. I would like my hon. colleague to comment on what the Government has done in this area, because it is the first Government to decide to take advantage of the illnesses of its citizens to reduce the deficit.

What does my hon. colleague think about the 10 per cent tax on medication? I am thinking, for instance, of arthritis sufferers who must take medication regularly, and who use liniment and aspirin to relieve their pain and suffering. This Government has also taxed all medication that belongs to the “family pharmacy”.

According to the Advisory Council on Health and Welfare, the increased number of taxes under the new Budget will cost a Canadian family \$125 more. Nevertheless, Progressive Conservative Members and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) would have us believe that they are helping poor families with the proposed changes to family allowance payments.

[English]

**Mr. Baker:** Mr. Speaker, even down to pet food and candy in the confectionery stores and down to woodburning stoves—practically everything. I do not know if they left anything out. Do not forget, too, that they have increased the normal rate. That is what we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, the total package put before this Chamber by the Minister of Finance.

When examining the total package and adding on to that the provincial sales tax on the bottom line, because the federal tax goes on first, one sees that those living in Alberta do not pay as much for that product as do those who live in Quebec or Newfoundland where the tax rates are different.

This Government also, Mr. Speaker, because of that package gave a windfall profit to the provincial Departments of Finance right across this country. About half of the federal tax is added on again in provincial sales tax at the provincial level. It is sometimes very comical to hear a provincial Premier say, “We did not increase taxes in our Budget.” He did not have to do so because he knew from this new-found federal co-operativeness that he was going to get a windfall profit from the Minister of Finance when he presented the federal Budget. The provincial Ministers of Finance did not have to increase the tax on gasoline; the federal Government did it for them. I see you are saying I am out of time again, Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** And everything else, too.

**An Hon. Member:** Rest your jaw.

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to rise today to say just a few words regarding Bill C-70. The Government says it is an Act to amend the Family Allowances Act. I think maybe it should be called an Act that is part of the Conservative program to make the rich richer and the poor poorer in Canada. Perhaps it can be called a Bill that is a symbol of the real Progressive Conservative Party's programs for Canada. It

is actually with a great deal of sadness that I rise today to speak to this Bill which will reduce family allowance payments. That is hardly the kind of Bill about which one looks forward to speaking.

● (1130)

We should consider the kinds of Bills that we should be discussing at this time. At a time when we should be coming to grips with the economic and social challenges facing this country, to be debating a Bill that is asking for a reduction in the amount of money paid to mothers for their children is absolutely disgusting. Yet I have been waiting patiently for members of the Conservative Party to rise and explain to the people of Canada why they are taking up the valuable time of this House to reduce the family allowance payments to Canada's children.

I have not heard many Members justify what is going on today. I hear Hon. Members of opposition Parties asking questions and pointing out the unbelievable nature of this waste of the time of the House of Commons, but I do not hear many Members opposite rising to justify the taking up of valuable time for such silly nonsense.

Perhaps there is some value in this exercise because it provides us with an opportunity to find out what this new Government is really doing. Multimillion-dollar PR campaigns are going on all the time and there are pages and pages of Government advertising in newspapers trying to explain all of the wonderful things the Government is doing. There is the usual mumbo-jumbo and bafflelegab that one hears during political discussions. Therefore, people are a little bit confused. However, discussing this Bill will provide us with an opportunity to give the public a clear example of the priorities of this Government.

I would like to remind Hon. Members that the Government thought it was important that we spend tens of millions of dollars on new uniforms members of in the Armed Services. Ask the people who are in the Armed Forces and the people who provide leadership in the Armed Forces if they thought that this was a priority. I do not think a single one has come forward to say that this was priority. However, tens of millions of dollars were spent on new uniforms.

We have seen corporate bail-outs occurring one after the other. I do not have to name the corporate giants of this country that were involved. The Government spent tens of millions and hundreds of millions. It did not matter.

There was a fair bit of discussion by Members opposite about the Western Accord. One of the aspects of the Western Accord was a \$7-billion tax relief to multinational oil companies. I know that the Hon. Member from Alberta is an honourable man and he will agree with me that \$7-billion worth of tax grants went to such multinational corporations as Texaco. There is enough money for that. There are billions of dollars for that and there are millions and millions of dollars for Ministers to jazz up their offices and to take special flights to their constituencies when time and time again commercial flights are leaving at virtually the same time.