

*Family Allowances Act, 1973*

We have been told by Government speakers, including the last one, that almost all of the people concerned will receive the same amount in total between Family Allowance and Child Tax Credit. Only a few on higher incomes, he tells us, will miss anything. He might have told us also that those people on higher incomes may well lose money or would lose money on the income tax if it were fairly graduated. The Government has failed to show why it is so important to put down a debate on national defence in order to have a debate about an income arrangement, which, according to the Government's own spokesman, makes no difference at all to the incomes of most people. This is the only thing on which the Government will allow us to speak.

I hope the Government will come to its senses later and allow us to speak on a more important subject soon.

Bill C-132 fits in as part of a general anti-child temper of the times. It cuts Family Allowance. There may be a temporary compensation for that, but the cut for the future is a message for families, namely: do not have children. This Bill picks on the weak, in this case the children, as the other two Bills pick on the weak, in those cases the pensioners. But this Bill picks on those even weaker because children cannot vote.

The Government's estimates of how much money it would save by this measure have varied all the way from June last year—through committee hearings when the Government admitted that the Government would save only about \$10 million—until now when the Government suggests that nothing will be saved at all, or perhaps there will be a net outlay to the children. That situation depends on the projections concerning the rate of inflation. The projections in both the November budget and the June budget were so wildly inaccurate that we cannot take them seriously. Therefore, the fact that the Government keeps pressing for the passage of this legislation and will not withdraw it, even though, by the Government's own figures, the Bill is meaningless and makes no difference to the battle against inflation, has to be examined more deeply.

As I said, this is in the context of a general drift of Government action in which there is less money for housing for ordinary people, less money for education for ordinary people, less money for health care and less money for public services, such as social and recreational services for ordinary people. In some places, such as downtown Toronto, this is even extended specifically to children where there are thousands and thousands of apartments that ban children and expel parents who are guilty of giving birth to children. Therefore, it is very interesting to find this piece of legislation pointed against the Family Allowance.

• (1730)

The Minister gave an interesting explanation in committee. When asked why another measure such as the child tax exemption or the Child Tax Credit was not used, she answered that it was necessary to use something that comes as a cheque into as many houses as possible, a cheque that people receive by mail. If she wants to look up that reference, it is on page 14 of the report of the fiftieth meeting. This was in support of her

concept of mobilization. You have to show people that they are being cut in the amount they receive rather than through a tax deduction that they do not receive. In other words, she wants to hit several million families with a monthly reminder of some type of penalty.

This is the part of the Government's approach to the economic crisis that we all recognize. I would like to give a contrasting approach. It is not the approach of any Party in the House, nor is it an approach of a political body. It is the approach of the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church who have suggested, through their commission, an ethical standard. It has been the cause of much debate. Some Hon. Members have opposed it. One Hon. Member opposite is apparently defending it or the Bishops' right to speak on it. I wish to comment on this approach.

The Bishops have suggested that the present recession appears to be symptomatic of a much larger structural crisis. They say that observers have pointed out that profound changes are taking place in the structure of both capital and technology which are bound to have serious social impacts on labour. It is obvious that when they say "capital", they do not mean the national manufacturers association. When they say "labour", they do not mean the Canadian Labour Congress. They are talking about human activities in a basic sense.

They say that we are now in an age when transnational corporations and banks can move capital from one country to another in order to take advantage of cheaper labour conditions, lower taxes and reduced environmental restrictions. They say that we are in an age of automation with computers, when human work is rapidly being replaced by machines on the assembly line and in administrative centres.

The Bishops do not claim that these are facts that are, in any sense, revealed by the Gospel. They claim that these are facts observable by any reasonable human being. I agree.

They also point to a reasonable conclusion. They conclude that the consequences are likely to be permanent or structural unemployment and increasing marginalization for a large segment of the population in Canada and other countries. That is exactly what we have today. The Bishops have suggested a cause for it, which I think the House would do well to consider seriously. In light of the Minister's refusal this afternoon to allow us to debate the matter of armaments and the arms' race, the Bishops' next comment seems very timely. They say, "In this context, the increasing concentration of capital and technology in the production of military armaments—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Order. I apologize to the Hon. Member but I have been listening to him for the last few minutes and it seems to me that he is getting away from the matter now before the House. That is, the motion relating to Family Allowances. I would appeal to the Hon. Member to come back to that subject matter.

**Mr. Heap:** Mr. Speaker. I am attempting to get to the bottom of the Government's strange behaviour in insisting beyond all else on pushing a Family Allowance capping Bill