

*Family Allowances*

**Mr. Nystrom:** It is limited to 15 per cent per quarter, and that is still 60 per cent interest per year. It is per quarter, Mr. Speaker, and the minister will check this out. If that is not usury, then I am not sure what is. I do not see any reason why, and I know the minister means well, the government cannot talk to the people in the Department of Justice and bring to this House a companion bill that will make it illegal for people to charge this type of interest, by making it illegal for the discounters to participate and practise their so-called profession, or perhaps to make it illegal to use these cheques that come from the federal government in the form of family allowance, as security.

One of two things can be done to protect the innocent woman who needs the money now to buy things for her family. She might think that the only way she can get it is to listen to a discounter, and pay the 15 per cent interest per quarter. I would commend the minister if she could do something along this line to protect the woman from a usurer and as well for doing what is necessary to protect a bill that could be very progressive.

I have two more questions. I understand the payment to be made to the woman will come in a lump sum. Would the minister consider having the payment spread out quarterly so that a person with five children under the age of 18 who gets \$1,000, would not receive a lump sum payment when the tax credits come out, but instead would get four payments three months apart for \$250 each? This too would be some protection against discounters or against people who want to be fast rip-off artists. In addition, it would help the mother and the family because there would be money available on a quarterly basis to buy things for her children, for example, food, clothing or other things they might need to make their life better.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has already mentioned that we in this party object to the basic family allowance being reduced from \$26 a month to \$20. In reply to that the government says it is putting more into the pie. I know that. But if some of the tax loopholes were plugged, as has been suggested by some other members of my party, more money than would be necessary would be collected to keep up the payments of \$26 per month. There are several loopholes that could be plugged. I am thinking particularly of the depreciation allowances to oil companies, and the capital gains benefits to people who play the stock market, etc. If loopholes such as those were plugged and made part of our taxation law which would be as progressive as this part, then there would be more than enough money to leave the family allowances at \$26 per child per month, instead of reducing the amount to \$20.

● (1752)

I hope the minister can answer some of my questions. The first question has to do with the provinces not taking advantage of this bill to recoup more of the money they pay out in welfare. Second, can the minister assure us she will do something to protect the innocent women of this country, who get this money, from rip-off artists? Third, as I said before, consider the possibility of that payment on a quarterly basis. It

could be two or three times a year, but preferably four, instead of a lump sum. If this were done this could indeed be a major reform. This bill could be a milestone or a watershed, doing something real for our country in terms of social legislation, and reforming the taxation system.

I want to make a final point. If we can introduce a tax credit in family allowances that has a bias built into the plan in favour of poor and low income people, why can it not be done throughout our entire taxation system? Why not the same philosophy running throughout our society? We could have a planned economy, using all of the resources, technology and wealth we have to create a country that would in a genuine way redistribute the wealth among the poor and low income people, the have-nots whom the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) spoke about today, instead of the system we have had for over 100 years.

Under our present system the only real judges that we have are the profit margin and the so-called competitiveness, the merits of the philosophies of the corporations which guide us. If this can be done with family allowances, let us use it as a model. It can be extended throughout our taxation system. This would make Canada truly a great place for everyone regardless of their social and economic background or where they happen to live. If we do that, a lot of people now living below the poverty line would have a decent break in life. They would have an opportunity to do something. They could provide their children with the goods they need in order to explore the roads and avenues of life. They would be a happier and healthier people living in a more harmonious society. Plug all the possible loopholes in this bill well, and use this philosophy to guide us down the road in the years ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, I shall certainly not take more than four minutes of the time of the House because that is all what is left today. I wish to express my views after reading time and again this bill which is not very long but which is very important for all Canadians. If we want to summarize the the general principles of that bill, I think we could say that we are going to take a chunk of all family allowances and give back a negligible part of it to a very small group and probably channel the rest towards other sectors of the economy. This is why I would not fulfil my responsibilities today if I did not draw that famous Bill C-10 to everyone's attention. I wish to expose before all Canadians the purposes, the hidden purposes of this amendment to the Income Tax Act. The bill is entitled: an Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for a child tax credit and to amend the Family Allowances Act, 1973. After reading this title I said to myself: Here we go again with family allowances!

I remember that the last time I spoke on this subject I urged that family allowances be paid for all children without discrimination, regardless of their parents' income, in other words I consider children as real Canadian citizens. And I advocated again the principle of universality as an essential condition for