

Family Allowances Act, 1973

definition, therefore, our young people and children hold the key to the future. Anything we can do in the months and years ahead to ensure that these young people, these children of Canada, receive support, encouragement and nurturing ought, as much as possible, to be the least we attempt to do as Members of Parliament.

What is the aim of Bill C-132? First of all, we must recognize that we are talking about \$26.91 per month, per child. That means that young people in Canada under the age of 18 can expect the Government of Canada to issue a cheque to their mothers on their behalf in the amount of \$26.91.

To put that in perspective, Mr. Speaker, it must be recognized that that sum of money may buy a pair of blue jeans—on sale. That is the kind of money we are discussing, the equivalent of the price of a pair of blue jeans on sale.

The Bill does two things. First, it points to the children of Canada and says: "You are one of the causes of inflation. By receiving \$26.91, you are fueling inflation in this country and that must be stopped. We must cap that. We must not allow you young people or your mothers in this country to continue fueling inflation."

That is absolute balderdash, Mr. Speaker. The young people and mothers of Canada are not the culprits.

Mrs. Mitchell: They certainly are the victims of this Bill.

Mr. Riis: The Government has not brought forward legislation to correct the role that the banks play in fueling inflation in this country. The fact that they fell over themselves in the last few years pushing money on Canadian entrepreneurs, on the corporate sector and encouraging people to borrow beyond their limits has not been discussed. That is what Canadians were talked into doing. I suspect there is not a Member who does not know a number of people who were pushed into borrowing by the lavish advertisements issued by the banks, telling us that we had money that we did not know we had. "Borrow now for a trip to Jamaica—borrow now to buy Canada Savings Bonds—borrow now to buy stocks—borrow now to expand your business operations—borrow to the hilt."

● (1410)

This means that the debt-equity ratio in this country for large firms, huge corporations, small partnerships and proprietorships is usually out of whack. We do not hear anything about the banks. We hear that the children of Canada are fueling inflation. Goodness, what kind of people would present that kind of argument and stand in their places saying: "We are proud today to hammer the daylight out of the children of Canada because they have fueled inflation in Canada"?

What about the land speculators? What about the housing speculators who flip real estate sales time and time again? Do they not fuel inflation? I suspect a lot of Canadians are guilty of fueling inflation in one way or another, but I can say that

there is unquestionably one group that did not go out of its way to fuel inflation. This group is made up of children, ages two, four and 15 years of age.

If we are going to talk about Bill C-132 as not being an effort to stop inflation, it will put to rest a good deal of the arguments that we have heard from the Liberal benches. What other possible motive would we have to impose a capping of Family Allowance payments of 6 per cent this year and 5 per cent next year if it is not to reduce inflation?

We have heard some people suggest that we are trying to save money. We have heard it said that the Government must save money. Let us look closely at the facts and identify precisely what it is we are attempting to say. I will quote briefly what the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) herself said in this House a few days ago. She explained to the people of Canada, through the House of Commons, what amounts of money the Government would save. As reported in *Hansard* at page 21117, we find the Minister said:

They represent \$70 million over two years. This could be explained by the fact that there will be a reduction in Family Allowances of \$320 million over the two-year period. However, there will be an additional cost to make up for the loss which the Child Tax Credit will cost the Treasury, amounting to \$250 million.

What that means is that, after causing concern and hardship for something like 3.6 million families in Canada and 6.7 million children, we are going to save \$35 million a year. Let us consider that for a moment. Let us put the savings from this Bill into some context. The Government is saving \$35 million a year by reducing the money mothers get for their children. Each Senator in the Senate will cost the Government between \$2 million and \$3 million each over the next number of years. Government advertising will be twice the amount of money that will be saved. Government advertising amounts annually to \$60 million plus.

Mr. Waddell: What do Coutts and Davey cost?

Mr. Riis: Canadian oil companies last year received something in excess of \$1 billion in hand-outs. One F-18, our infamous jet fighter that we hear about continuously and is under a great deal of question, costs \$35 million. In an effort to save money, all the Government is saving is the equivalent of one fighter aircraft while causing a lot of hardship for 6.7 million children in this country.

Let us recognize one other small aspect if the Government opposite is interested in saving money. Let me make a suggestion, which I make in all sincerity. Rather than take \$35 million from Canada's mothers, money to provide food, shoes and the necessities of life for their children, let us reform the tax system of Canada so that hundreds and hundreds of Canadians who earn well in excess of \$100,000 each year and pay no income tax pay their fair share. We are not suggesting that we gouge the rich people of Canada, or that we expect the