

[English]

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

[Translation]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. member for Joliette excuse me. I shall give him the floor in a moment, another hon. member wishes to ask a supplementary.

[English]

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I lost something in the translation.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): No, you did not.

Mr. Benjamin: Since the minister did not have formal engagements and has no assurances, may I ask him whether, in view of the proposal in the throne speech to up meetings on this subject with the four western provinces and in view of all the briefs and submissions that have been made by farm organizations and the four western provinces on this subject for over 40 years, he or his department has prepared alternative proposals of any nature for presentation to these meetings?

[Translation]

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, I know that my department is making a detailed study on this problem, and when we meet with the provinces we shall be in a position to discuss this matter with them.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have just about reached the end of the question period but since it is the special responsibility of the Chair to look after independent members I will recognize the hon. member for Joliette.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY

FAMILY ALLOWANCES—STATE OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN OTTAWA AND QUEBEC

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I bear the Chair similar interest.

I should like to put a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Referring to the Speech from the Throne, the Quebec minister of social affairs stated that he thought it would now be possible to make progress in family allowances matters.

Could the minister tell us whether he has received new proposals from the Quebec government or whether he at least intends to meet in the near future the minister in charge of social affairs in Quebec?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I have received no recent communication from the Quebec minister of social affairs. I have had the opportunity of meeting him and getting in touch with him on various occasions, and I am sure I shall do so again in coming weeks and months.

The Address—Mr. Diefenbaker

• (1500)

[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Tuesday, January 9, consideration of the motion of Mr. J. J. Blais for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Stanfield (p. 52).

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, it is natural that I should be very deeply touched by the warmth of the reception that I have received from the government benches. They are ringing bells at the moment. They may be wringing their hands before I have finished.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I at once want to say that I never rise in this House without that feeling of diffidence that binds us all. There is a deep relationship of friendship between members sitting in different parts of the House. Always at the beginning of a new parliament it is a matter of pleasure to be able to join in welcoming the members who enter this chamber for the first time, and to realize that these new members have an idealism and a desire to serve that are of so high a quality that everything that we can do to assist them, we who have been here longer periods of time, should be done.

I speak as one who has seen eight Speakers chosen to the chair you again honour, Sir. I have been here a very long period of time, and I can say to you, Sir, what I have repeated on other occasions, that the ability and the capacity that you have displayed make your name one that will always live in the record of great Speakers of this House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: At the same time, I must refer to something that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has done to make it possible for a member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to be Deputy Speaker of this chamber. That hon. member is a man who has given himself in devoted service, and has become recognized as one of those members who, when he speaks in the House, has something to say. His knowledge of the rules will be of tremendous benefit to him.

I mentioned a moment ago the relationship between members sitting opposite one another, and I am going to say something at the moment that I have not said on any other occasion. The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson) has just suffered the loss of his mother, a woman whom I knew through the years, whose philanthropy and service earned for her tremendous credit in the hearts of all who knew her, and to him I extend my deepest sympathy.

Now, Sir, having said those things, I want to say something about the new members. You have been a great Speaker but, in my opinion, you have been hampered by rule changes that were made, one or other of them, under closure, which have had the effect of throttling the mem-