

Family Allowances

Mr. Speaker: I am glad that the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate is vigilant in this debate. He will also note that I had intervened before this to bring the hon. member for St. Mary back to what I considered the principles of this motion. I hope that he will follow those observations and then we will get somewhere on this particular motion.

(Translation):

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure for me to abide by the wise rulings you give concerning the younger members of the house and even concerning such a veteran as the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate.

As I was saying at the beginning of my remarks, the resolution introduced by the hon. member of the opposition has some merit. Indeed, it causes us to wonder whether it would not be advisable to amend the Family Allowances Act.

Yet, it seems that the resolution is rather vague concerning the period of time a person would be allowed to spend outside of Canada for the purpose of education. I cannot conceive of a person studying abroad for one, two or even 10 to 15 years and then not returning to Canada even though his children have been getting family allowances all that time. Then the Canadian government would have paid non-resident children, enjoying the advantages of the foreign country, allowances coming from Canadian citizens' income.

I do not question the seriousness and the intentions of the hon. member who put forth this resolution which, I think, is more objective and sincere than the amendment which was introduced and, which was completely political in character and had no social importance whatsoever.

I cannot miss this opportunity to replace in its real context the statement made by the hon. member for St. James, who said that the Family Allowances Act was the result of the generosity of a former prime minister, the Right Hon. Mr. King. To bear out his own statement, he quoted a former leader of the Conservative party and deplored his general attitude towards family allowances.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the time when the Conservatives opposed neither the act nor the principle of family allowances but rather the way the Liberals had planned it. Their attitude was an insult to the people of the province of Quebec. While we Conservatives asked for family allowances at climbing rates,

the Liberals wanted decreasing rates. That was the issue that divided the Quebec members.

And such was Mr. King's policy.

We Conservatives tried to introduce more fairness into our legislation. Therefore the amendment to this resolution would certainly have been more serious if it had been presented as the hon. member suggested a moment ago, in the form of a bill rather than under the guise of a publicity trap. The introduction of a bill would have afforded the hon. member an opportunity of explaining why he wanted to amend the Family Allowances Act.

We are all in favour of family allowances. I would even support family allowances adapted to economic cycles. Indeed, I am of the opinion that family allowances should be flexible and move with the cost of living, thus always ensuring a maximum allowance.

Family allowances render great services to families, and I think we are all anxious to find a formula that would take into account the variable requirements and economic conditions in our nation.

The resolution could have been more explicit as regards the duration of absence abroad for education purposes. It could have contained some provisions about the case of a person collecting allowances from our country for a certain period, then deciding not to return to Canada. This resolution could have incorporated some arrangements providing for a refund to the government of amounts paid for a number of years to persons who decide to remain outside of our country. In my opinion, we should be given an opportunity to consider this motion on another occasion when we might include certain provisions in line with what I have just suggested.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to repeat that if unemployment has increased in the city of Montreal and in the province of Quebec it is due to the sorry program put forward by the Liberals who were elected at the time of the provincial election.

(Text):

Mr. R. J. Cashin (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I find myself in somewhat of a unique position in supporting, as I now intend to do, the resolution introduced by the Social Credit member. I should also like to take this opportunity to sympathize with the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond who seemed to be having some trouble in getting off the ground. That difficulty is, of course,