

Family Income Security Plan

amendment the legislation before us will be much more efficient and will be administered much more cheaply. I hope that the bill will be passed on second reading in record time and that, when amended, it will be in such form that we will be proud of ourselves, then, when it is given third reading, the minister will be proud of the legislation.

• (1550)

[Translation]

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of prolonging this debate, but I think it is my duty to say a few words on a subject I consider of extreme importance, not only because I represent a riding that is mostly labour class and where the average salary is relatively low, but also because Quebec workers are not sufficiently represented in Parliament. Since these people do not have much say in Parliament, I think it is my responsibility to take part in the debate and make a few comments on Bill C-170 respecting family allowances.

I would not like to repeat all the arguments that have already been made. I think, Mr. Speaker, that hon. members who have expressed their views on this measure have dealt with the fundamentals of this bill. They have pointed out the flaws both in its drafting and its implementation. They have tried, in particular, to show to the Canadian people that they are being led once again to believe that the moon is made of green cheese, by which means the government wants to assert that it is considering with benevolence, and in accordance with its philosophy of a just society, the situation of the working class, of the small salary earner and of the large family, particularly in Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot be fooled in this House and we very well know, as the hon. member who spoke before me has pointed out, that whatever our pronouncements and objections to this bill, the government has decided to adopt it and that all our efforts will fail to alter the position or the decision it has already taken.

Indeed, this attitude is not new. Since the government of the just society has assumed power, it, alone, has charted our course of action and it, alone, has made its own decisions while ignoring the democratic role and the contribution of opposition members in the House.

This being said, Mr. Speaker, I felt I had to rise and say clearly that we of the Progressive Conservative party have stated our position, which is that we give outright support to the principle of family allowances. We acknowledge the need for them, and I feel that those who, like me, represent working class constituencies where there are a lot of low and middle income people should acknowledge—no matter what party they belong to—the urgency of seeing to it that the working class will not be once again limited both by the rise in the cost of living and by the cuts the government makes in some social legislation—in short, that it will not lose once again through legislation which attempts to deprive further the families, the middle class of this country.

Mr. Ouellet: What cuts are you talking about?

[Mr. Benjamin.]

Mr. Valade: If the hon. member would have some patience, I will tell him. Let him be quiet and listen. Let him take part in the debate if he has something intelligent to say, and I will tell him what cuts I am talking about.

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: The parliamentary secretary on a question of privilege.

Mr. Ouellet: The hon. member for Sainte-Marie says that if I have something to say, I should rise and speak. If he was in this House more often, he would know that I have already taken part in this debate.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There is obviously no question of privilege here.

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, not only is the hon. member's remark stupid and silly, but it shows, above all, that he does not see that even the minister who sponsored the bill is not in the House, and that the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau), who supposedly wants a just society, has never been in this House to take part in the debate and to hear arguments and discussions on such an important bill. The Prime Minister of Canada should be the first to give a good example by being present in this House.

Mr. Ouellet: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member rises on a question of privilege. I hope it is not the same he just raised because we could discuss for a long while as to whether an hon. member from any party is present in the House during a debate. I think such considerations have very little to do with the debate which should take place regarding the bill now before us.

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Sainte-Marie has called my comments silly. I can take the liberty, I think, to point out to him that his own remarks must be somewhat uninspired since there are no Conservative members—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, I would not want to ignore that remark because among the 55 Quebec Liberals—the province most affected by this legislation—hardly three or four are in the House. There is only one Progressive Conservative member representing the Canadian metropolis. Unfortunately, the injustice committed in the last election is that the present government which is indebted to Quebec for the majority enabling him to exercise power happens to penalize that province by bringing in Bill C-170. Most of all, we should not forget that the province of Quebec responded to the Prime Minister's appeal to give him a majority government in order to establish a just society. Yet, it is the province most severely penalized by Bill C-170 that the Liberal party will compel the House to pass in a few hours.

Mr. Cyr: That is not true.