

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 27, 1972

The House met at 11 a.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

FAMILY INCOME SECURITY PLAN

MEASURE TO PROVIDE BENEFITS IN RESPECT OF CHILDREN

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-170, to provide for the payment of benefits in respect of children, as reported (with an amendment) from the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

Mr. Speaker: Before calling motion No. 1 as it appears on the order paper the Chair might refer to the procedural aspects of the motions. After examining the motions proposed by hon. members I would like to suggest that motions Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 appear to be acceptable on procedural grounds, unless hon. members want to suggest that for one reason or another they are not.

Motions Nos. 5 and 7 appear to present some difficulty. I think that the hon. member who has moved them might agree that they have financial implications. However, it might be said that motion No. 5 to some extent covers the same ground as motion No. 6 which is sponsored by the minister, and of course motion No. 6 is covered by a recommendation. In these circumstances it may be that the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe would feel that the purpose which he seeks to achieve through his motion No. 5 would be realized under the terms of motion No. 6. But I would suggest, subject to any arguments that might be submitted by hon. members, that motions Nos. 5 and 7, because they have financial implications, could not be moved.

Motions Nos. 8 and 9 appear to be acceptable from a procedural point of view.

I might also add that it might be difficult to have any of these motions considered together. In the circumstances, because there is no clear link between any of these motions except perhaps Nos. 5 and 6, I would think we might proceed with them one at a time, with the Chair putting motion No. 1 so as to launch the debate on the motions. I would be pleased to hear the advice and obtain the guidance of hon. members on these several points.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, do I understand you to say that we can reserve the right to make some comments on what Your Honour has said? It may be, now that the minister has accepted the proposal put forward by the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall), that it would not be necessary to proceed with the hon. member's motion. Depending on the progress

that the government makes, and how it jumps around from bill to bill, we might argue the point with respect to his other motion later this week or next week.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, we see nothing wrong with your suggestions.

Mr. Speaker: In other words, my understanding is that the hon. member for Peace River has suggested that my interpretation of motions Nos. 5 and 6 is correct, that they are essentially the same motion, and that if the House debates, considers and votes on motion No. 6 this would be deemed to cover motion No. 5. The only motion which would remain to be considered from a procedural standpoint would be motion No. 7, which we might consider from that standpoint when it is reached.

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe) moved:

That Bill C-170, An Act to provide for the payment of benefits in respect of children, be amended by deleting the definition of "parent" in subclause 2(1), lines 16 to 18 on page 2, and substituting the following:

"parent" in relation to a child means an individual who has, in fact, the custody and control of the child and, where a family relationship exists, means for the purpose of paragraph 5(1)(a) the female parent except in any case where the female parent may be considered disqualified by reason of infirmity, ill health, improvidence or other reasonable cause or in any case where other special circumstances or reasonable cause of any kind may so require."

• (1110)

He said: Mr. Speaker, as there seems to be some evidence of a willingness to co-operate I will be very brief in my explanation. The bill provides that the benefits may be paid to the father or mother in the discretion of the government. The amendment would provide for the benefit to be payable to the mother, as is now the case under the Family Allowances Act and the Youth Allowances Act, and that the government would only have discretion to pay the benefit to someone other than the mother when there were good and sufficient reasons so to do as stipulated in the amendment.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, we are certainly not arguing about the acceptability of this motion. I do point out to the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall), however, that I believe it presents more problems than it solves. Under the present family allowances policy we prescribe under the regulations that, where a child is in the custody of both parents in a normal setting, payment will be made to the mother. This would be continued under the present legislation and the House has the assurance that, as has been the case for years under family allowances, the regulations would continue to provide for this.