

Family Allowances Act

● (1210)

When we want to determine the intellectual honesty of this Government, of this Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, we must use as criterion the principle of universality which is the basic element of our social safety net. Its integrity should not be questioned and will not be questioned.

In January, 1985, speaking on behalf of his Government and on his own behalf, the little guy from Baie-Comeau stated: We are not going to touch universality. Four months later, he blamed the Canadian public for lacking the necessary maturity to discuss social programs. That is the image of our Prime Minister!

In this same blue consultation paper, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Social Injustice of Canada pledged that the findings were aimed at starting a debate, both open—I wonder if he knows what it means—and objective on our tax benefit programs and at redirecting all the savings to programs aimed at urgent social objectives, including the protection of needy Canadians, rather than the reduction of the deficit. It is written black on white. That is the word of the Government and the member from Toronto or wherever he comes from who wants to reduce the deficit on the backs of our children. There is a contradiction in that party, Mr. Speaker. And there is still more evidence that the accused is guilty as charged.

On December 20, 1984, as shown on page 1401 of *Hansard*, my colleague for La Prairie (Mr. Jourdenais) asked the following question to the Prime Minister:

Could the Prime Minister inform the House whether it is his Government's policy, or whether his Government intends, to reduce gradually over the years the tax exemption for families with children?

The answer of the Prime Minister, whose words must normally and quite rightly be believed, was as follows:

No, Mr. Speaker. That is not what the Government intends to do.

However, if you look in the Budget, you find that it is exactly what he has done.

Mr. Boudria: Aunt Jeanne was right!

Mr. Jourdenais: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for La Prairie (Mr. Jourdenais) on a point of order.

Mr. Jourdenais: The Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) has just quoted something that I never said in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart).

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, I never spoke about the Hon. Member for La Prairie (Mr. Jourdenais); it is not worth it because nobody knows him. I can understand that he would feel insulted because we never speak about him, but—

Ms. Copps: He has nothing to say.

Mr. Malépart: I only have one minute left?

Mr. Speaker, I could also quote the comments of the Minister who, in his honesty, invites the committees . . . it is true that he looks good. When I was an MLA in Quebec, Maurice Bellemare called people like the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Prime Minister clean cut guys because they are neatly combed, neatly dressed and have a distinguished appearance, but they are just empty shells, Mr. Speaker. I agree with Maurice Bellemare.

Mr. Speaker, all the groups, that is 92 groups of citizens from across the land came here to tell the Minister: All the money you will be slashing from income tax deductions should be transferred to the income tax credit. What do we see in the budget? It is taking \$55 million out of the pockets of families in need. They are not surprised to hear the Minister of State for Small Businesses (Mr. Bissonnette), who defends millionaires, suggest that indeed they were going to reduce the deficit with that.

We find in the document that a member of the organization of the Health and Welfare Advisory Committee, an independent body, which is neither Liberal nor Conservative or NDP has carried out a major study, and I would urge Progressive Conservative Members to read it. It clearly shows that needy families will lose money starting from the first year. Secondly, couples with an average income of \$26,000, which does not make one rich, will lose \$125 starting from next year because of this Government's senseless actions and the ignorance of Progressive Conservative Members.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, and I will conclude on this for lack of time, unfortunately, yes, I can tell you that when we supported the senior citizens, we worked day and night, body and soul to force those Members who, as they are now saying today about family allowances, pretend they support that and today they look foolish because the Prime Minister backed down, because he recognized his error; we will be working body and soul and all the groups in Quebec are joining together, and I can tell you that Progressive Conservative members are in for a show and we will find another Mrs. Denis, and Charlie Brown will again have someone speaking his mind to him.

[English]

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I like very much the title to which the previous speaker referred, "The Minister of Social Injustice". Several years ago, the former Prime Minister ran a campaign on a "just society". He was in power for a number of years but he failed to reach that goal. Chief Cardinal from Alberta wrote a very good book entitled *The Unjust Society* which tabulates the injustices which have been done to the native people across the country. I think it is time for a new book. Perhaps we can use Chief Cardinal's title and call it, "The Government which is Developing an Unjust Society". Not only is that the net result of the Government's Budget but in the area under discussion we