

Family Allowances

Indian Brotherhood to discuss certain aspects of the bill. And yet we are asked to pass the bill. The minister has confirmed that status Indians living on reserves do not have to file income tax.

Second, the minister has said that she has no answer, no answer at all, as to how status Indians living on reserves will collect the \$200 tax credit, or Inuits in federally administered territories. Is the minister telling us now that she has not discussed this with her officials and that she has no plan to pay these people the tax credit?

Miss Bégin: Of course not, Mr. Chairman. The hon. member for Provencher is getting excited without any reason whatsoever. The status Indians do not pay taxes for income earned on the reserves. They do pay taxes like any other Canadian on income earned outside the reserve even if they come back to live on the reserve regularly. I hope this is clear. We are talking now of another bill which will provide \$200 more per child to each mother whenever the income is low enough. If the technicality to obtain that money is to be connected by a form to the income tax system, the Indian mothers will file that form. I do not see what is wrong with that. I would like the hon. member to tell the House what is the crime behind what he is making in terms of sous-entendus submissions and things that nobody understands. Would the hon. member be clear?

Mr. Epp: The point I want to make to the minister—and I am not excited—is that the minister has come in with a half-baked proposal that she herself has no answers to. That is the point. It has been a long-standing agreement between the status Indians and Governments of Canada that there would not be changes in the payment of income tax without full agreement between the two parties concerned. The minister does not have that agreement. She has not even sought the agreement. In fact, she has not even met with the National Indian Brotherhood. Now, suddenly the problem has developed and she says yes, I must meet with the National Indian Brotherhood.

● (2122)

She has no answer; she has evaded the question totally. I ask again: Will status Indian mothers living on reserves have to file income tax in order to get the tax credit?

Miss Bégin: Mr. Chairman, I am, rightly or wrongly, suspicious of people who start taking as their victims the Indian mothers. I do not know why they speak only of them.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss Bégin: Where is it hurting? I would like to know if they are in favour of or against the child tax credit for Indian and Inuit children. They have never answered me. I wonder why that sort of question always comes from the same party, suggesting there will be misuse. I have heard it said more than once.

This bill will provide mothers with a child tax credit. In order to do that, it will connect them to the tax machinery. It has nothing to do with making them pay tax, and I hope the hon. member understands that.

Mr. Epp: What about filing?

Miss Bégin: If they do not pay tax, they will not file. That is pretty clear. Therefore, I would ask him not to throw in that kind of red herring. It is similar to the other one to frighten mothers who will be entitled to the new child tax credit.

Indian mothers will file, with the help of other Indians on the reserves, a form that will entitle them to a child tax credit of \$200 per child. It will bear the name "child tax credit". It will bear the name "tax". However, hon. members know it has nothing to do with a tax in the sense of income tax. The hon. member knows that, so why play games? I do not understand his question. It does not have anything to do with income tax for Indians living and earning money on reserves.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Chairman, the minister knows full well that the official opposition has endorsed the \$200 per child. I therefore suggest to the minister, in her frustration of not having looked at this bill carefully, that she not try and pull that kind of a stunt, making the allegation that a member on this side of the House gave her the impression that he was not in favour of the \$200 per child credit for children who are status Indians. The minister should know that.

Miss Bégin: Good.

Mr. Epp: I am glad she finally understands it; it has taken a long time. The point we are trying to make is that there are certain procedures that native people have not had to fulfill vis-à-vis the Income Tax Act as have other people, or the Inuit people living in federal territories.

The minister has now said that a child tax credit form, or whatever she wants to call it, will be developed whereby mothers of status Indian children will apply for the \$200 credit. I would like the minister to explain to which department that will be sent, her department or the tax department.

Miss Bégin: As I have often said in the House, and the hon. member for Provencher may have missed it, the 1.5 million mothers in Canada, including Indian mothers living on reserves, who are non-filers will send the form to the tax address which will be on that form. What is the difference between a mother who is on welfare or one who makes so little money that she is a non-filer, and an Indian mother in that regard? That is why I asked the question. I am very pleased to have clarification of where the official opposition stands.

Mr. Epp: May I then ask the minister whether native people need a social insurance number.

Miss Bégin: Mr. Chairman, everyone connected to the tax system will need a social insurance number as per the act.