

For their information, Mr. Speaker, I should like to read, if I may, Clause 15 of the Bill:

Where a child has, either before or after the coming into force of this section, disappeared under circumstances that, in the opinion of the Minister—

God the Father.

—raise beyond a reasonable doubt a presumption that the child is dead, the Minister may issue a certificate declaring that the child is presumed to be dead and stating the date on which the child's death is presumed to have occurred, and thereupon the child shall be deemed for all purposes of this Act to have died on the date so stated in the certificate.

The Minister behaves like God the Father and decides unilaterally, in his wisdom, that a child died on such and such a date.

In the following subclause, His Lordship the Minister keeps for himself a right or privilege, to wit:

If, after issuing a certificate under subsection (1), the Minister is satisfied from new information or evidence that the date of death is different from that stated in the certificate, the Minister may revoke the certificate and issue a new certificate stating a different date, in which case the child named in the certificate shall be deemed for all purposes of this Act to have died on the date so stated in the new certificate.

Under this Bill which he would like us to adopt, the Minister wants to have the right to decide, following the report of some official, that a child is dead. Depending on how he feels, the Minister can decide that a child is dead one day and alive the next.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that only a person who has no children or who ignores the feelings of parents towards their children could think of such provisions. I think it is altogether odious and scandalous for them to write such provisions in the Bill when we know the tragedy parents have to go through when one of their children disappears. Surely those who drafted these provisions never came close to meeting these people or discussing this issue with them. It is a fact that compassion may not be a feeling exclusive to the Opposition, but I think that the Government and its spokesmen apparently have no notion of the word "compassion".

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising to find such a provision in this Bill, because the Bill as a whole is itself altogether unacceptable. This is my third term as a Member of Parliament, and my riding has had to face a great many problems and difficulties, but since I was elected for the first time seven years ago, never has a Bill raised such a spontaneous reaction in my riding. Never has my office received so many petitions and letters from mothers living in all parts of my riding who write: we cannot be heard. The only way for us to be heard is through you, and we ask you to present these petitions on our behalf. What the Opposition has done and is doing in this fight, Mr. Speaker, does not just concern the Opposition; it is not just talking for the sake of talking, or objecting for the sake of objecting. It is a matter of performing in this House as millions of Canadian men and women are expecting us to do.

Family Allowances Act, 1973

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition in this fight is not merely conveying, voicing the very numerous statements that have poured into our constituency offices. In my constituency, for instance, I have received hundreds of petitions, and on that issue, that one legislation alone. I have received more petitions concerning Bill C-70 than on any other issue since I came into politics.

This shows without the shadow of a doubt, without any question, that mothers, parents, are squarely in disagreement with this Bill.

This piece of legislation also is an excellent demonstration, an excellent illustration, which very clearly depicts this Government's kind of administration. Families are being ridiculed, drained, abused, especially children, for the sake of getting a few million dollars under the pretence that public finances must be put back into order.

On the other hand, those few million dollars being snatched from the pockets of the poor, of the have-nots, of the single-parent families, of all those men and women who have every difficulty making ends meet, those few million scooped in that way are literally wasted in other areas, or handed out to large multinational corporations, or given away to the very affluent as capital gains exemptions.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Government is depriving the most in need, those who definitely are not in a position to face tough living conditions, and redistributing that money to people who in these circumstances could contribute a lot more to putting public finances back into order.

Mr. Speaker, I have before me a table that shows quite clearly what the Government will be getting, what it will be scooping.

For 1985-86, there are to be \$15 million. For 1986-87, the figure is \$80 million. For 1987-88, the figure is \$140 million, and for 1988-89, \$200 million. That money will be scraped, will be taken from families with children. That is the kind of money that will be snatched from the pockets of those families for whom family allowances in many cases are simply vitally needed.

Mr. Speaker, what is just as important in my view is that during the last election campaign, those people were peddling around pious promises: the program of universality would not be tampered with; social programs would not be tampered with; the have-nots would be looked after.

But hardly eighteen months later, they are savagely attacking families, they are savagely attacking children after having tried to do the same thing to senior citizens.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the amendment put forward by the Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) is extremely worthwhile in the circumstances, in view of the fact that the clause in its present form, as it is now worded, is not just unacceptable, but quite simply odious,