

Family Allowances Act

long one. You would not want to declare it six o'clock, would you?

Mr. Benjamin: Agreed.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I will leave the affordability aspect for another time. However, I think it is very clear that the reduction in the value of family allowance is not the way to go if we must bring about a reduction in our deficit.

I thought for a moment that the Hon. Member who spoke before me was reading my previous speeches when he talked about the need for employment creation so we could get people working and paying taxes. That is what we have been saying all along. Let us focus on that; let us put people to work now so that they can pay taxes so we will have the money to keep the family allowance indexed.

The reason it was indexed originally, was to ensure that we did not have to keep coming back and increase the amounts by acts of legislation. It was to establish a base and from that base keep in tune with inflation so that nobody fell behind. It was hoped that perhaps from time to time, as Governments changed, we might be able to improve that base. The philosophy was that there was the protection out there and this Government, like the previous one, is quite committed to eliminating that protection wherever they can, particularly when it affects ordinary Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you and I look forward to another opportunity at a later date.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments?

Mr. Dingwall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very happy to hear the remarks by the previous speaker. I wonder if he would entertain a question and perhaps provide some of his thoughts and the thoughts of his Party. As many of us know, the family allowance of roughly \$31 a month goes to each child. I am wondering if the Hon. Member has in his constituency and knows of other individuals across this country who are in a situation where on paper a family may look as if they are fairly well, and I use the word "oiled" in terms of income.

I hope you do not interpret my remarks as being sexist, Mr. Speaker, but the income as a result of the family allowance goes to the mother and that money is not expended on frills, or on grandiose schemes to invest in corporations in the United States—and I am coming to the question—it is spent on the necessities of the child and of the family. It is spent on such things as rubber boots, jeans, T-shirts, sneakers, socks, school supplies and medicines.

I want to ask the Hon. Member as the first part of my question, does he have in his constituency situations of that nature and is he aware that there are large numbers of Canadians from coast to coast who are in that situation, where they use the family allowance not for what I think the Government is suggesting, as maybe for frills, but for the necessities of having a good family life. Could he answer that question?

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall) for his question. Very clearly, not just in my constituency and elsewhere in northwestern Ontario, the part where I come from, but right across this land there are people who need that money. They are just so close to the line in terms of their cost of survival. That relates not just to those who we traditionally think of as low-income Canadians but to those who through no fault of their own have been forced for years into very high mortgages. Mothers in particular have been forced out of the home to work in order to help pay for that. Those who have chosen to stay at home use the family allowance to provide those extras that, thanks to Government policy, were taken away from them through exorbitant interest rates, consumer price increases and things like that.

What we have to do is turn things around. We have to say to those recipients of family allowances that we are going to continue the protections. We are not going to allow the value of that cheque to be reduced through any Act of this Parliament. What we want to do now is make sure that we tackle those other things that will take the pressures off so that all Canadians can have a better life.

• (1720)

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly leave time for my colleague to ask a question as well. With regard to the fairness of reducing the family allowance, does the Hon. Member not agree with me that there could be nothing more unfair than for a national Government with in excess of 200 seats to get tough by saying to families with children that the Government will reduce the family allowances? Would the Hon. Member not agree with me that that is absolutely unfair and shows the ruthless and uncaring attitude of the Government?

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, not only would I agree with the Hon. Member but I would point out that since we are looking for fairness, perhaps the Government could impose a minimum tax on the rich, something which would bring in at least \$400 million a year, provide some fairness in the tax system and eliminate the need to fiddle around with the support programs that exist for women and children in this country.

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Member, but before I ask that question, I would like to comment briefly on the previous question and answer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): No, just ask the Hon. Member a question, please.

Mr. Dingwall: Can I comment on his question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): No.

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the Hon. Member's comments regarding the provisions in the legislation relating to presumption of death. I wonder if the Hon. Member is aware that the provision that is included in this legislation is already included in the Canada Pension Plan