

*Family Income Security Plan*

the percentage earning \$7,500 or less, using that calculation as a rough guide the percentage escalates to 74.1 per cent of the total number of taxpayers earning \$7,500 or less. It is precisely this group that will do no worse than at present in respect of benefits under the family allowances program and a very significant majority of the people within this group of 74 per cent will do very substantially better under the legislation before the House.

Therefore I ask, when this legislation is of tangible benefit and improvement for a great majority of this 74 per cent, and none within the 74 per cent will do worse, can you wonder why I am surprised that the NDP will vote against it? Can one be surprised that they seem to be advancing their appeal to the top 25 per cent of the income earners in Canada? It seems to me a weird and wonderful posture for the leader of the NDP and its members who have historically adopted the posture of more for the little man.

It is very interesting that the leader of the NDP states that he has had a chance now to more carefully read the bill. He stated on April 19, as recorded in *Hansard* at page 1444:

—we have had an opportunity since the Easter recess to study the bill before us further and the more one studies it and its effect, the more it becomes clear to us that it is unacceptable in principle.

Then he said:

Of course, I know that my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), in leading off for our party in this debate said that we were prepared to give the bill second reading and send it to the appropriate standing committee.

That was the leader of the NDP referring to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, saying that he was speaking for the entire NDP. The leader of the NDP went on to say, again referring to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, that the hon. member did have many serious objections to make in respect of the bill. So over the Easter recess the leader of the NDP decided to reverse the previous decision of that party as expressed by their own House leader and said that on second thought they were no longer prepared to support the bill. What kind of drivel is that? I suggest it is indicative of the cynicism of the NDP with reference to its posture on this bill. Will that hon. member for one minute and in all seriousness advance the proposition to all hon. members that the selectivity principle of this bill is new, that it spells the end of universality and that this became apparent only over the Easter recess?

All the essential features of this bill were in a bill tabled in the House in September, 1971. We know that when the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre indicated he was prepared to give the bill second reading he had studied it fully. Every member of this House knows that he is a well known expert on matters of income security. Do the members of the NDP really expect the House to believe that only over the Easter recess did they become fully aware of the provisions of this bill and decided to reverse their stand and vote against it?

Are we to assume that the leader of the NDP thinks so little of his House leader that that hon. member would not have explained the provisions of the bill to the whole caucus and therefore they did not know what they would be voting for when they said they would support the bill

[Mr. Munro.]

on second reading? Are we to assume that over all the months since September, 1971, during which this bill has been before us, a major piece of social legislation, none of the members of the NDP understood its provisions? I suggest that over the Easter recess the NDP decided to change its posture. It decided, cynically, that perhaps it could appeal to the middle income voter and obtain some political gain at the expense of the poor of Canada.

**Some hon. Members: Shame!**

**Mr. Munro:** Perhaps a further indication of this political cynicism and expediency can be found in the example which the leader of the NDP selected in pointing out why he could not support the bill. Of course, he picked out the income level of \$7,500. I point out that this is the very level at which he hopes to capitalize by obtaining some support. When he refers to this level he does not refer to the man making \$15,000 a year, \$20,000 a year, or the millionaire, all of whom are losing all the benefits under the plan. He zeroes in on this particular income group and thinks it is the group where the government is vulnerable. This is the group to which he chooses to refer.

• (1540)

The leader of the NDP picks out the example of a family with an income of \$7,500 and one child and says, "Look at the deplorable features of the bill" because in this particular case they receive \$1 less per month than under the present family allowances scheme. If he had picked one child of that family, and instead of placing him under the age of 12 had placed him over the age of 12, then it could be calculated that they would not lose \$1 per month compared to the present family allowance, but would gain up to \$2.10 per month. Or if the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) had wanted to be a little more objective he could have said that that family at \$7,500 had two children over age 12, and then he would have had to say they would receive extra FISP benefits of \$3.50 to \$7.50 per month.

Let us look at another example of picking carefully selected examples to point out his particular point of view. He went on to give the example of a family with an income of \$8,000 and on that family he again bestows one child under 12. Naturally, the child receives the lower of the two benefit levels, \$5 compared to \$20. The leader of the NDP said:

If the family income is \$8,000, the payment to the child will be \$3.45 a month.

Of course, in that case the child had to be under the age of 12. If the family had two children, one under age 12 and another over 12, the benefit would be \$15.10 instead of \$14 as at present, for a net gain. But he did not give this family two children, or even one child, over age 12. This was probably contrived to indicate his point that here is an income redistribution policy which is detrimental to the middle income group. He had to pick an example where there is a marginal decrease of \$1. Just how cynical an approach does the New Democratic Party think it can perpetrate not only on the members of this House but on the Canadian people? The leader of the NDP hopes he can show that he cares for the middle income people. He thinks he has assessed their most vulnerable spot and