discriminatory. I do not know if that is because the two Ministers responsible for the Bill are from two of the richest ridings in Canada or not. A fact like that always has some type of influence. One of the Ministers comes from London, Ontario. Everyone knows that, per capita, London is the home of the richest group of people in the country. I am not trying to divide the rich and the poor at this point. I think that is *démagogie*. It is a fact that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) happens to be more at ease in financial circles. I doubt very much if he knows what a discounter is. The Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone), the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier and myself are more aware of this situation because we live where we live. We live right in the heart of it. In my district there are tax discounters and food banks. I am sure many of my esteemed colleagues in the House are not aware of what exactly a food bank is. They are also totally unaware of what a tax discounter is because they have never seen one.

The inspiration for the legislation before us has come from the two Ministers whom I mentioned previously. In this respect I believe they would say to me, "Yes, Marcel, we think you have a point. Are you happy with the Bill, Marcel?" I would reply "Yes, I will vote for it". I am Marcel, the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis. I wish that we could call each other by our first names. Perhaps we will be able to do that someday, perhaps after the next reform of Parliament. The last reform did not live up to my expectations; however, I will be careful.

• (1630)

I would like to say to my colleague that the recent taxation statistics show that approximately 800,000 families, and not 1 million as the Government claims, would receive the pre-payment. This is a little more than half of the 1.5 million who qualify for the child tax credit. I would like to put the following on the record, just to underline what the Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) was saying. According to Government estimates, not Liberal or NDP estimates, discounters received almost as much as we will give to many people under the very low level. According to government estimates, discounters received over $20 million of the child tax credit in 1984. Discounters kept more than $41 million of the 1984 tax credit. To go back not only to the questions of the Hon. Member for Mount Royal and the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy), you are right that something should be done. The tax discounters took away $61 million in one year. They did not take it away from people who lost money in the bank that we reimbursed so rapidly. They took it away willingly out of the despair of people who need so many dollars and cents that they had to go to a discounter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The period for questions and comments is now terminated. Is the House ready for the question? On debate.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): It is not my intention to speak for a long time, but I do think there are some things that have to be put on the record with regard to this legislation.

I do want to say some words with regard to the fact that this legislation does not deal with the problem we face with tax discounters. As a result of this legislation, there will be very large sums of money going to some families through the child tax credit. The Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) on behalf of our caucus has expressed our agreement with the idea that these people should be getting the money as soon as possible. However, there is a danger within that. There are tax discounters in all parts of this country and they are allowed to charge very high, unreasonable rates of interest. Because of the need of the people that receive the child tax credit, the fact that they do not have a lot of cash since they have expenditures which are quite often equal to their total income, the Government has recognized they need this money. It is quite obvious that they do have a cash flow problem. Because of that these tax discounters are allowed to run rampant in this country.

The United States does not allow these tax discounters to operate. When this legislation was introduced, for the most part it was supported by all Members in the House. It could have included a clause to ensure that tax discounters would be forbidden from touching this money, and the money would have ended up going to the mother and the children for the necessities of life. A percentage of that money was being lost because it was going into the hands of what I quite rightly call tax discounters, "rip-off artists". There was a fundamental flaw in the legislation.

The Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) mentioned that in 1985 there were 500,000 cheques cashed in this manner. A lot of money was not going to people who needed it most. With those types of statistics and figures, why has the Government refused to act? I would not make the political, partisan remark that tax discounters are supporters of the Conservative Party. I do not think there is any Party that would go on record or want to be connected with them. I do not believe that is the reason. What is the reason? Some of the Conservative back-benchers in the last couple of days have said that there are people who need tax discounters. If that is the case, then the Government should be getting the money to the people faster. I do not believe that we should allow a situation to exist where, because people need the money, tax discounters are allowed to operate. That is exactly the opposite approach to what we should be taking.

Some Conservative Members say or imply that there are people who need the money, so we should allow tax discounters to operate. They say that this is a freedom for people who need the child tax credit. That is not a freedom. That is not a choice that these people are making. Certainly, they are making a choice but the choice is strictly out of necessity, and that is not the right approach. That is a fundamental flaw in this legislation and it is high time the Government took some action on this matter.

There are other problems with regard to the legislation, but I am not going to oppose it because I believe it will provide some help for some people. As I mentioned earlier in asking a