

*Social Development Ministry*

which the government would finally and intelligently integrate all the multiple social policy concerns of the Canadian people and their government, we might be in favour of this proposal in a wholehearted way. As things are, I invite you, Mr. Speaker, to look at the statement setting out what is to be integrated. What is to be integrated is social policy with expenditure management. That is not the integration of policy at all, or, at least, that is not the primary intention, which is, I suggest, to subordinate social policy to the perceived fiscal needs of the government. All this would be done within the third claim made by the government, that this is an extension of the so-called "envelope system" that the Progressive Conservatives brought into government in their short stay in office.

We believe that is not an expansionary move, not a move to innovate and create in the field of social policy but, in fact, a means by which to reduce the commitment of the Canadian government to social policy goals and social policy directives in the years to come. As I said before, this is explicit in the capacity of the new ministry of state to decide on the allocation of funds between departments and what I take to be the most revealing statement of the rationale, namely, is that as new social policy needs and goals are established they can only be arrived at by a trading-off process whereby money must come from old programs to go into new programs; it must be taken from old priorities to go into new priorities. It will be the function of the new ministry to decide what programs are to lose in order that other programs might gain. I submit that this is a product of either a certain amount of smugness on the part of the government with respect to the present state of Canadian social policy, a smugness which implies that the present position is so satisfactory that we can afford new programs only by syphoning off money from programs which are already established, or else it is the counsel of despair, a feeling that there will be no more new money, that there will be no more of the wealth created in this country going toward social programs and that, therefore, some very difficult decisions are ahead of us as to the allocation of social policy funds.

Perhaps it is thought that a special mechanism—in this case the ministry of state for social development—is needed to supervise those very difficult decisions and take some of the heat off the on-line ministers when those decisions have to be made. It would not surprise me if in the future, in the context of the new ministry, we were to see a renewal of the fascination with selectivity in social programs as opposed to the maintenance and expansion of existing universal programs, a fascination such as we began to see under the Progressive Conservative government. The minute we start to talk about trade-offs, and say that new things will only come at the expense of old things, and when so many of the old programs are universal programs, then I think this sets a dangerous political context in which one can see the erosion of universality in our programs. I hope this is not the direction in which the government is moving. I know that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) is a supporter of universality in social programs, but under this legislation the hon. lady would have less "say" than if this ministry had not been

formed. That is something to keep in mind. She will be a junior minister, and I think that is shameful when we think of the role ministers of national health and welfare have played in the past history of Canadian social policy.

● (2120)

There are too many things to be done, and too many needs to be met. There are too many things to be done to rely on a system that in its very opening rationale speaks of trade-offs. We will need more money in the absolute sense. The so-called economic pie or the funding pie for social programs will have to grow bigger. It will have to have an absolute growth as opposed to only apparent growth in order to do the things which are needed.

Some of the things which need to be done have been mentioned already by hon. members in the course of the debate so far. Particular groups have particular needs. The most recent group whose needs have been brought to our attention is that of the children of Canada. Their needs were brought to our attention by the report of the Commission on the International Year of the Child. The recommendations made in the report of the commission are not going to be able to be financed by robbing from veterans affairs, from income security for the elderly, from health care, or from any number of other things which the so-called social policy envelope will be dealing with. It will not be the way to look after the needs of Canada's children to take from those other groups which have, fortunately, been able to establish the legitimacy of their needs with the Canadian people.

The needs of some groups have not yet been mentioned, or have been mentioned only in passing. I refer to the needs of single parent families and women, natives, and the handicapped, with regard to special training and employment programs. All these things are to be handled within the context of trade-offs and of what can be done by taking money from old programs and old priorities, and I think this is not the way to go about developing an adequate social policy for Canada.

I would like to mention just one thing which has come to my attention as a member of Parliament for only a year or so now, and that is the fact that many people find themselves in a tremendously disadvantageous and humanly unfortunate situation as a result of disability. I am one of those people of whom the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) spoke when he spoke of the year 1960. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) mentioned, in 1960 I was only in grade three.

I grew up within the context of the so-called welfare state and under the impression that we, as a people, looked after each other, that we were a progressive, advanced, caring and sharing society, and that no one in Canada would be left in some of the positions of hardship which have come to my attention since I became a member of Parliament. I am surprised that some of the programs we have, and about which we do so much bragging, are in fact so stingy. They go out of their way to make people crawl, beg and scrape in order to prove that they need the very barest of incomes. I am thinking