

*Social Development Ministry*

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** I thank members for the applause and I hope they will learn a lesson or two in brevity from me.

I want to point out that the development of a social policy has, in my view, two primary concerns. The first of those two concerns is the redistribution of wealth, and there are certain areas in which that redistribution must take place. It must take place among the regions of the country and, to its credit, the province of Ontario has always been one of the greatest givers in the redistribution of wealth. Of course, Ontario has had more of the benefits from confederation over the years than have the other provinces of this country, but that is not the fault of Ontario, it is a result of the policies that were designed in the beginning of this country, policies which were probably necessary at that time but which require refinement now.

There is the necessity for a redistribution of wealth among the provinces and, I am afraid, we see provinces more and more trying to compete one against the other, closing their borders one against the other and preventing the movement of labour and goods from one province to another. Those are dangerous activities that are harmful to the progress of a good social development policy for our country.

● (1650)

Also there is difficulty with the redistribution of wealth within the provinces. For instance, in my own province traditionally there has been a vast difference among areas of the province, particularly the two basic areas of the province, the northeast and the southwest. Traditionally, there has been much greater opportunity, much greater earning power and much greater wealth in the southwest than in the northeast. Giant strides were made in the 1960s to redress that problem. Much redress has taken place, but that is not to say that all the problems have been solved. I am sure the same applies to other provinces.

As I become more and more familiar with the province of Ontario, I see great disparities among various regions. I am told by people I meet from other provinces that the same applies there. So social justice requires that the federal government and the governments of the provinces have good, well-developed social policies.

Finally, in this regard there must be a redistribution of wealth among individuals. Of course, that is one of the main purposes of the income tax system that is often criticized and maligned, but without doubt is the fairest of all taxation systems because it taxes or should tax on the ability to pay. I am not sure it always works that way in Canada, but I suggest to the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development (Mr. Chrétien) that he urge upon his colleagues in cabinet an immediate in-depth review of our income tax policies and a refinement of our income tax system so that in fact people and corporations will be paying income taxes based

on their ability to pay and not on the basis of the loopholes they are able to find in the system.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Benjamin:** Ask the CPR.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** I will not comment on the gibes from across the floor. The hon. member who intervened from his seat should have corrected the CPR when he was there.

Another area in which social policy and development is required is in protection, promotion and stability of our institutions of democracy, the family, education, the economy and the individual. I want to elaborate on those a little bit. It is impossible to hope for the continuation of democracy if one of the basic tenets of that democracy is not to bring about social equality among the people who live within that democratic system.

In that vein it is urgent that we as a government take steps to enhance the basis of Canadian society, that is, the family. There are many obstacles being placed today in the ability of the family to stay together, to work together and to grow together as the family did in the early days and certainly up until at least the end of the Second World War. Without the family there is really no basis for society, unless we want to go to the kind of communal living some societies have tried to develop and have found to be failures.

One important basis of the family is a respect for the heads of the family. I am referring to the father and the mother. If they are to have a strong family unit, it is important that they have the income to provide for their children the necessities of education, health care, proper nourishment and protection from the elements. Those are the most important things a social policy must provide. I suppose it would be scary if we knew the number of children who have died in this country prior to the introduction of hospitalization in 1960 or thereabouts and the introduction of medicare in 1970. They were not able to take the places they might have had in our society because their parents could not afford to take them to a doctor or to hospital, and because they were afraid of debts they would never be able to pay.

The next item with which I want to deal is the protection of our economy. I suppose I should have put that next to our system of democracy, because our economy cannot provide for the proper social development of the nation unless the economy is free, but not so free that it becomes our master rather than our servant. Of course, the economy of any nation should be the servant of the nation. Therefore, we must ensure that the growing number of multinational units in the economy are designed so that the government of the country in which they operate has effective control over them to ensure that they function in the interests of the nation and not just for their own interests.

Finally I want to deal with the rights of the individual. In a nation as blessed with wealth, resources and opportunities as ours, every individual has the right to be able to look forward,