

### Family Allowances

measure pending the introduction of the new \$20 level which is to be effective in January.

I come now to the main reason for my rising, which is to remind the minister that a friend of his, and of mine, I am happy to say, a former top civil servant, has written to him, as he has written to me, suggesting certain things which might be considered. I rise to ask the minister to give thought to them. I know that the ideas that were put in the letter to which I referred cannot be put in the bill today, and I also know that Bill C-211 has already been drafted. But this former top civil servant, who has some expertise in this area, suggests that what we have here is a Family Allowances Act. It is not a children's allowances act, though sometimes popular terms that come close to that are used.

● (1640)

The expert about whom I am talking suggests that if the purpose of this legislation is to protect the integrity of the family and to make the family a viable economic unit, and so on, in addition to whatever is provided for the children there should be an allowance for the mother. It is also suggested that if we are concerned about the integrity and security of the family, the same kind of legislation should include a housing allowance. I support both of these ideas.

I am in the mood today of enjoying the progress we have made, but I am looking forward to the future. I underline these ideas which, as I say, have already been placed before the minister by an expert in this field, in the hope that he will consider them. We got over that monstrosity of FISP. The minister has introduced some new ideas into the concepts of social security that we are hearing from that side of the House. Maybe those ideas come out in this kind of parliament much better than they do when one party has a majority, but at any rate the minister has come out with some new ideas.

I should like him to go back and read the submission sent to him to which I have already referred, and ask the officials of his department and his colleagues in the cabinet to consider whether a way to redistribute income and establish the security and integrity of the family would not be to have family allowances include not only an amount for each child but an allowance for the mother and for housing as well. To me, these ideas make sense.

I conclude by saying what I have often said, that this is a good piece of legislation. Although we support it, it is not the last word and we hope the minister will give serious attention to ways of improving this good piece of legislation.

**Mr. Lalonde:** Mr. Chairman, may I thank the hon. member for his kind remarks in regard to the drafting of this particular piece of legislation. I am sure the person who drafted it will be very pleased to hear what has been said, all the more so since the same person drafted the previous bill. This may indicate that the problem that the previous bill had to deal with was more complex than met the eye at that particular time.

As to the other point raised by the hon. member, we are indeed examining the points that he has raised and which have been raised by correspondence. I should only like to

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

refer the hon. member to proposition six of the working document, where we state the following:

The incomes of those who are working but whose incomes are inadequate by reason of family size (even after the increase in the family allowances proposed above) or by reason of the nature of their employment should be supplemented under a single general income supplementation plan with built-in work incentives.

So exactly how the problem that the hon. member has raised is going to be met is the subject of study and consideration at the present time. Although I do not think we will be in a position to bring forward an answer to this problem in time for consideration with the other family allowance bill, it is the type of problem on which I hope to have some proposals during the course of the next year.

[Translation]

**Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to comment very briefly on this important bill before us. Incidentally, I would like to point out that it is not always the most ponderous bills which are the most important and which bring the greatest quality and satisfaction to the population.

I also congratulate the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) for having found a way to introduce so comprehensive a bill while using so little paper.

That being said, I would also like to add that society has evolved extraordinarily in the last forty-odd years. I recall that, when I was young, people were hoping for legislation which would authorize the payment of family allowances in Canada. I remember also having become a proponent of this. I was not in politics, but I was certainly concerned with social and family matters. And then, some very narrow-minded people accused us of simply propagating marxist ideas because, as they said, to give money for nothing, that was communism. So, they could not realize that we live in society precisely in order to give ourselves more economic advantages, to better succeed in life and that Canada was a country which could give itself such a law.

Today, you do not hear about these charges any more and all seem convinced of the fact that we must absolutely pass ever more measures designed to safeguard the rights of families and individuals.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare, in his speech on second reading last Friday, said that the principle underlying an immediate increase in family allowances was a stronger purchasing power for needy families, families with low and middle income, but I say that if this measure is good—the benefits being \$12 a month—to fight inflation and increase the income of low and middle income families, we would all the more obtain better results if it were raised to \$20.

● (1650)

Perhaps I will be told that this would be more costly and that taxes would have to be raised. In my opinion, my colleague from Rimouski (Mr. Allard) stated in his remarks rather valid ideas in this connection and about the means which might be used to finance higher family allowances within the framework of the current system. Anyway, I ask the minister—to whom I have already