

*Family Income Security Plan*

whether he be in the opposition or on the government side, must play a part in the interest of society. And, as long as the people's representatives are satisfied with making comments in order to delay the passage of a bill, to embarrass the government, or to make its work difficult they will continue to lose the confidence of the people and to serve the people badly.

In my opinion, the purpose of this bill is laudable, for it is designed to help those who most need it, and I do not think this can be denied. Of course, some provisions are disputable, some calculations need to be reconsidered, and I trust that at the committee stage some changes can be made to improve the bill. However, to oppose this bill designed to give more to those who most need it, I feel, to be dishonest towards the class of needy people.

In my opinion, we should stop and think about this. If we consider this possibility, I do not think that arguments as stupid and weak as have been put forward hold. Any change involves difficulties.

But, Mr. Speaker, should we do nothing just because there are difficulties involved? I think we should be braver and more optimistic than some members are—and I want to say again that I am not talking in this way to try and save the government. I do not care whether the government is right or wrong; what matters to me is that it is introducing legislation which makes sense and which could help a class of people who really need it—and I am convinced that this legislation offers real advantages for those who most need help.

I feel, therefore, that we must be objective enough in our comments designed to improve the bill—but let us not try and unduly delay passing of this bill by proposing amendments which simply ask that consideration of the bill be deferred for an indefinite period, when we know very well that large families have for years been in need of an increase in family allowances.

Some members use arguments put forward in 1944 in favour of a universal system. This is the way the present family allowance system was conceived of at the time of its introduction. It was agreed to. I believe that those who introduced it 30 years ago were very clever people; that legislation was quite valuable and useful since it was accepted. However, taking into account the changes involved in the present context, where we admit that a number of people belong to the poverty group, we must act. Now, the government is introducing legislation designed precisely to give a little more to the group including the neediest people, and in that respect we are confronted with absurd and weak arguments probably prompted by election fever. I trust that the Canadian people who are closely following the progress of this legislation will not be influenced by such weak arguments since we know perfectly well that the requests of the less fortunate people are much more important than any possible electoral campaigning.

I shall end on these words: indeed, when shall we consider honestly enough the interests of the community? Indeed, when will we manage to behave as businessmen in the administration of the country, since its administration is our responsibility? Indeed, when shall we prove objective enough in this Parliament to get over partisan-

[Mr. La Salle.]

ship in order to grant to millions of people the increased benefits they are expecting?

I would like to think that these few comments will not be interpreted as a mere expression of support for a party. On the contrary, I am making them in the belief that this is my responsibility. If certain governmental measures were wrong, I would not hesitate to convey my opinions to the government. But since I believe that this legislation aims at rectifying a situation that can no longer be tolerated, I think it is my duty, as a member for a riding which has its own share of poor people, to deal with this matter.

This legislation will put a label on a certain category of people, those in need, who are going to be so constrained as to end up begging for their allowances. I am sorry that we should be compelled in the present circumstances to create those distinctions. However, I believe it is better still to implement this legislation as soon as possible. This does not mean that the government should fold its arms and do nothing for the next thirty years.

On the contrary, I think that this legislation should be implemented as soon as possible so long as the government does not entertain the belief that he has nothing more to do to try and find new formulas that will improve it.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, I hope that we will soon proceed with the study of this bill in committee and finally reach this third reading stage, in order that those who are most in need could benefit still more of a legislation that will have been passed by responsible people in Parliament.

[English]

**Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw):** Mr. Speaker, I could not help noting the remark of the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) when he suggested that although he regretted the fact that this bill provides selectivity, we should pass it. He said it is time we stopped thinking of what is contained in the bill, sent it to committee and passed it in the House so that those affected will know what is in it.

I am sure that anyone who does not belong to a political party which has a philosophy has no real concern about what happens in the House of Commons. People talk about political opportunists. The hon. member is in that category. He talked about sending this bill to committee in order for it to be improved. From his experience I am sure he realizes what little chance there is to do anything in committee when we have a government that is completely insensitive to the rights of Canadians.

In answer to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro), the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) made it very clear that we are not voting against the payment of \$15 or \$20 but against the type of administrative nightmare that will be created if this bill is passed in its present form. We listened to the minister. He said that something must be done to alleviate the situation now faced by people in the low income bracket. We agree that something must be done. However, when the minister talks about so-called vertical redistribution—I think that is the phrase—on a selective basis, that is not acceptable to the New Democratic Party nor is it acceptable to the majority of Canadians. If the minister