

destruction of the principle of universality and the administrative jungle that it will create. It will also divide, inconvenience and even hurt some people.

One can recall the mid-1940's when old age pension measures were substantially changed and improved, and when the family allowance program was discussed across this country and in this parliament for many months. It was finally enacted with a great deal of fanfare by the then Liberal government. One cannot blame them for that, but only expect it. When the principle of universality was suggested the then Prime Minister of Canada, Mackenzie King, spoke fervently about the inclusion of that principle in the field of social security measures, particularly in respect of old age pensions and family allowances. One can recall when the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent was Prime Minister of our country and became eligible for the old age pension. He publicly and with some fanfare received and accepted his first cheque at the age of 70 to show, not that he needed it, but, his support as the Prime Minister on behalf of his government and the Liberal party of the principle of universality. The point was that he did not need the money, but that the universal application of the old age pension was designed for the benefit of the people.

Similarly in respect of family allowances, Mr. Speaker; those in high places, both in government and in other sectors of our society, who do not need these allowances accept family allowance cheques because they, too, agree with the principle of universality. This government, over the past four years, has adopted many measures that attack people, and many measures which give aid and comfort to wealthy corporations, to an extent that is almost unbelievable. This government has attacked old age pensioners by destroying the principle of universality, and now it attacks children.

I suppose the best illustration I can give quickly is one which can be found in one of the provisions of this bill. The minister proposes that children who are in orphanages, foster homes or are being supported by public funds in other ways, will only receive half the benefits. This is the meanest kind of attitude to adopt. Surely, children in these circumstances need even more than the children in normal homes. Because governments at the federal, provincial and municipal level are participating in the support of these children in foster homes or orphanages, and the federal government is paying half the cost anyway, this government reveals a typical, bureaucratic Liberal attitude by paying only half the allowances. That is surely an attack on the children who are unfortunate enough to be in orphanages or foster homes. It is difficult to understand how the Minister of National Health and Welfare or any self-respecting Liberal, if there are any, could countenance such an outrage.

I should like to repeat what my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said yesterday, that the time has come to say no to this further destruction of what was the leading social security system in the world. I agree with him that the time has come to say no to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, and if he wants to take us on in the country in respect of this matter we will only be too glad to oblige him, even in his own constituency. It is time to say no to this destruction of

Family Income Security Plan

the principle of universality. It is time to say no to the government in respect of snooping into people's private affairs. It is time to say no to paternalism and patronizing of the poor. It is time to say no to the inevitable administrative boondoggle which this kind of bill will bring about, and it is time to put an end to this attack on children and to reject this Liberal government's version of a middle income group. I do not class as a middle income what is suggested by the minister, and I think most people in the country would agree with me.

I recall a survey being conducted in the city of Toronto two or three years ago by a joint group of welfare and business agencies. This survey showed that a man and woman with three children living in an average home with a 30 or 35 year mortgage, with one car, attempting to put the three children through university, could not do so on less than \$11,000 per year in the city of Toronto. The minister calls that level of income high or high middle, and excludes people making that much money from receiving benefits under this legislation. We all know of people with a total income of \$7,500, \$8,500 or \$9,500, whether it is a single income family or a husband and wife both working, who have a continual struggle to keep their heads above water. They do not live high off the hog. They do not have two cars and do not go to Florida every winter. They struggle to meet their mortgage payments and the payments on their furniture; they struggle to educate their children. They hope to have sufficient money for a two or three week vacation once a year, and often they borrow the money for that. The Minister of National Health and Welfare says they should benefit less because he calls that a middle income. I would hesitate to classify even \$15,000 a year as middle income, let alone \$7,500.

Each year we will have to raise the levels of what can be called middle income. In five or ten years someone with an income of \$7,000 or \$8,000 a year will be living at the poverty level, particularly if we are still victimized by Liberal economic policies, because this will mean more and continuing unemployment and a continual loss of control of our own destiny in this country. If we continue to have this kind of policy we will have more inflation, and what is considered by the experts as the poverty line now will be doubled in a few years.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, who will still be here then, will be pleading with the government, if we are unfortunate enough to have a Liberal government at that time, to double the levels referred to in this legislation. He will be pleading then to build in an escalation clause. We are pleading now to build in an escalation clause in the family allowance provisions just as we did in respect of old age pensions. Each year, automatically, if the cost of living goes up 4½ per cent, the family allowance benefits go up 4½ per cent and similarly with old age pensions. But this miserly, so-called free enterprise Liberal government condescends to provide a 2 per cent escalation in pensions of civil servants and in the guaranteed income supplement, then turns a blind eye to everybody else.

• (1530)

As has been said by my colleague, the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn), the proposed \$15 or \$20 levels just