

Family Allowances Act

family allowances. The Conservatives had to backtrack on Old Age Security pensions and restore full indexation. I still have some hope if only Members on the Government side had a little more courage that the Conservatives will backtrack on the family allowance issue.

Mr. Speaker, every day, thousands of Canadian men and women are abandoning the Progressive Conservative Party for the simple reason that this Government and this party have no courage and no convictions, and are led by a man and a bunch of non-elected people who have no time for Government Members.

Last night, Mr. Speaker, during the CBC report on the election of a new Parti Québécois leader, which I followed very attentively, the Progressive Conservative Party was represented neither by a Conservative Senator nor by a Conservative Member. However, that same Progressive Conservative Party was represented by Mr. Jean Bazin, a good friend, I may say a very good friend, of the Prime Minister of Canada. Am I to infer, Mr. Speaker, that if our mothers want to retain full indexation of family allowances, they should go to Fernand Roberge or Jean Bazin? Every day, and especially today, we are seeing examples of the uselessness of elected representatives.

They are gagging Members and deindexing family allowances.

• (1620)

Mr. Fontaine: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Lévis on a point of order.

Mr. Fontaine: The Hon. Member was referring to the Parti Québécois Convention. This has nothing to do with the issue at hand. I would therefore ask the Hon. Member to either aside by the rule of relevance or simply sit down.

Mr. Rossi: Mr. Speaker, I think this is most relevant, even though it concerns the Conservatives, and I will leave it to the Chair to decide that this is not a point of order. But it does get on your nerves!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) has the floor to carry on with his speech.

Mr. Rossi: I have concluded my speech, Mr. Speaker, and I would invite my colleague opposite to get a good look at the Standing Orders. And besides, he has much to learn.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Beauharnois-Salaberry.

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I welcome of course this opportunity to take part in the debate on the

motion this afternoon, because from the outset, and to respond to the suggestion made by the Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) that among the Progressive Conservative Members silence is golden, we have been debating the issue for quite a while speaking within our allotted time, and we do not make a habit of constantly repeating ourselves.

We are often told that we forget because we came here from the other side of the House that there is a lack of consultation as we were told this morning, and an Hon. Member opposite also told us this morning that we are running the Government as if we were operating a business and, this might not be good, although in the same speech there was a contradiction on that.

I would like to return to each of those points, Mr. Speaker, not to over-justify but to explain. My honourable friend for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) said this morning: "You voted for a change and you were elected on a change". The least they can say is that we fulfilled our promise. My colleague referred last night to a leadership convention, he said: "At least I wanted to rank last, and I fulfilled that promise".

It is not that we are necessarily forgetting, but we must assess the situation as it is. The Hon. Members opposite are often making fun about the fact that we often mention the deficit, as we often do. But that deficit, the billions of dollars accumulated in that deficit, certainly forced us to revise certain decisions and certain directions in the statements we made. On that point, there was a change. During my election campaign, as people in Beauharnois-Salaberry will admit it, I often repeated that we should, if there was a Conservative vote . . . the Liberal Party always said: "From now on, tomorrow, it will be like yesterday, but with a slight indexation." This is what we wanted to change, Mr. Speaker, and I think we are in the process of changing it.

Indexation, Mr. Speaker, and I am now speaking on my own behalf, is an indebtedness we are laying on our children's shoulders and which we cannot evaluate right now. Honestly I do not think, and when it was stated this morning that we should not run the Government as one operates a business, I believe that quite to the opposite, indexing was not hatched by Canadian Quebec businessmen necessarily, it was devised by the Government and it was not necessarily a good thing for the Quebec Government in 1974 to introduce that. I am in a good position to know, I was a negotiator at that time, and admittedly it was quite reluctantly that I ended my negotiating career for the reason that we were giving something we could not evaluate. It is not possible, Mr. Speaker, to manage the general finances of a country by stating that next year, this or that will be indexed! And when they blame us for not having consultations, I think it is pushing it too far. There were parliamentary committee hearings on that, there were even working papers issued. This was widely discussed, to a point that in my constituency, in many constituencies and even in Liberal and New Democratic constituencies, consultation meetings were held. If we hear Hon. Members speaking here