

start attacking them. Even Governments which institute social programs attempt to erode them, whittle away at the benefits and try to bring into disrepute the fundamental purposes of the programs. With medicare, there is extra billing. Medical care and hospital premiums now amount to a sum of almost \$700 per year for a family of four in Ontario, which is the richest province in Canada. These attacks do nothing more than whittle away at the accessibility and the universality of measures such as medicare and hospitalization.

We went through bitter experiences in this regard in Saskatchewan for all too many years. However, we went ahead anyway and saw them through. Every time we have had Liberal and Conservative Governments in this country nationally—which is the only kind we have had—they start something which they then attempt to undo. I think the Liberals have a lot of nerve. In 1970, just two years after Mr. Trudeau took over, they sought to wipe out family allowances completely and replace them with an income test called the family income security plan. That is a plan which would enable the Government to snoop into everyone's affairs. The Family Allowances Program is universal. Those in higher income brackets will have family allowance benefits taxed back and then some. The process is a great deal more efficient in this way. With a little restructuring of the income tax system, this tax back could be all the more certain.

The Liberals wanted to wipe out the family allowance. I am glad to see that they have been converted, although I suspect the conversion will last only as long as they are in opposition. They are notorious for being great progressives when they are in opposition. However, as soon as they are in government they revert to the traditional conservative style of governing and the traditional conservative attitudes toward social programs. It was only when there was a minority Government from 1972 to 1974 that we were able to force the Liberals to abandon the family income security plan. I must say that at that time the Conservatives were just as vociferous as we were that there be no tampering with the Family Allowances Program. The Conservatives and the New Democrats fought together at that time and we won that round.

The faces have now changed but the speeches have not. We have had Liberals stand up in the House and make the same speeches which Tories made in those two years. We have Tories standing up and making speeches which the Liberals made during that period of time. That is something which has occurred a great deal since last September 4. It is pure hypocrisy to hear the Liberals defending the principle of universality in social policy given their record in office. A former Minister of National Health and Welfare, John Munro, assailed universality, while his Cabinet colleague and Minister of Finance at the time was none other than the present Leader of the Opposition. How much credibility do they think they have?

Much has been made about the national debt and the ability of the country to afford family allowance benefits. In 1974, the interest on the national debt was 22 per cent of all federal expenditures, the same percentage as now. In 1947, some 7.7

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per cent of federal expenditures went to family allowances. In 1984, some 2.4 per cent of federal Government expenditures went to family allowances. The last major increase in the program occurred in 1974, due to the fact that a minority Government was in power and we forced the Government into making the increase. From 1972 to 1974 family allowances were doubled and indexed, which accounted for only 6.1 per cent of federal expenditures. Today, they make up 2.4 per cent of Government expenditures.

The National Council on Welfare has pointed out what deindexing will mean to families on low incomes. The council has pointed out that those in the \$9,000-a-year or less range will lose money. There are many Members in the House with families in their constituencies who fit into that category.

● (1200)

I do not understand the Government now after its many years in opposition—and I have been here for almost 17 of those years. The Conservatives joined with the New Democratic Party to fight the efforts of the Liberal Government to whittle away and destroy universality. But now they do not believe in universality. It seemed then as if the Liberals thought that the old age pension would destroy incentive to work, just like the Tories do now. It does pay to be consistent, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to one's own basic principles, as well as the principles of a political Party. If the Conservatives had stood up in the debate on this Bill and said they have changed their minds and admitted they were wrong, their credibility would have been improved. If they had said that they were wrong in the years in which they fought the Liberals to get those family allowances indexed, if they had said they now agreed with the position the Liberal Party took a number of years ago, then there would be some semblance of honesty in the position taken by both Parties.

We welcome the Liberals who joined with us in fighting to preserve full indexing for family allowances, just as we did when the Conservatives joined us in supporting full indexing. But I wish the Conservatives would be straightforward and tell us honestly and openly that they have changed their minds, that they were wrong before. But, of course, Mr. Speaker, all they have done is to change positions, and there is nothing new about that. The only difference between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party is that one is in and one is out. In fact, Mr. Speaker, both Parties notoriously and historically have taken money from the rich and votes from the poor, and then promised to protect them from each other. Surely a kind of straightforward honesty is needed from both the Government Party and the Liberal Party. The Conservatives should have the courage to stand up and say, "We've changed our minds. We want to do what the other fellow wanted to do before". If they were honest about this, perhaps they would receive a little more credible treatment from the people of Canada.

I hope the House will decide at the eleventh hour to support the six-month hoist, and that will be the end of that. The Government can come back with a host of other means which