

Family Allowances

without the careful planning and supporting programs which I believe to be necessary if the intent of the legislation is to be realized.

I have briefly mentioned some of the studies which the government is currently undertaking and which bear upon the substance of the bill before the House. I have also attempted to place the question of legislation requiring seat belt wearing in proper perspective with other approaches to the same objective which are also under study by the government.

While I support wholeheartedly the aims of this bill, I do not believe it would achieve the results which its sponsor anticipates. Further, I am concerned lest it endanger the achievement of the desired reductions in deaths and injuries of vehicle occupants by subsequent, more comprehensive or alternative measures.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. I regret to have to interrupt the hon. member, but as it is six o'clock the hour appointed for the consideration of private members' business has now expired.

Mr. Gaston Isabelle (Hull): Mr. Speaker, with the House's consent I would ask for leave to revert to routine proceedings in order to table a committee report.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Does the House give consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

HEALTH, WELFARE AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Fourth report on Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs—Mr. Isabelle.

An hon. Member: Six o'clock.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

[Mr. Guay (St. Boniface).]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

FAMILY ALLOWANCES ACT AND YOUTH ALLOWANCES ACT

AMENDMENTS TO INCREASE PAYMENTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lalonde that Bill C-223, to amend the Family Allowances Act and the Youth Allowances Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, when the House adjourned this debate at five o'clock for private members' hour I had just begun my speech on Bill C-223, the bill to increase the family allowance to \$12 beginning October 1. This is the government's response to the rising cost of living and is an attempt to help families that find it very difficult to feed and clothe children. I was outlining some of the policies of the Liberal government both when it had a majority and in the present minority situation, and referred to the various family income security plans the government had proposed and which in the wisdom of this parliament had been rejected. We now see an interim measure in which the minister of health has decided to raise the allowance to \$12 per child. The allowance will be non-taxable. At five o'clock I was pointing out that this step was so typical of Liberal policy, being too little, too late.

The question that comes to the mind of every Canadian is this. If this is an anti-inflation policy, if it is a policy to combat the high cost of food and clothing, why was the family allowance not raised earlier than this date? I have a suspicion that the family allowance would not have been raised at all had it not been for the rail strike, for the fact that parliament was recalled and that the New Democratic Party presented, as one of its proposals to the government to help Canadians meet the cost of living, the suggestion that there be an immediate increase in family allowances.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) as late as mid-August said while he was vacationing in Kenora that prices were hurting but that this was not sufficient to recall parliament. I wonder whether he would have had the nerve to come to my constituency of Sault Ste. Marie and make that statement, for in August a survey conducted by the Canadian Press showed that Sault Ste. Marie was the second most expensive place in Canada in which to buy food. According to this Canadian Press survey, the cost of a food basket of standard products purchased in Saint John was \$16.14, in Toronto \$13.57, and in Sault Ste. Marie \$15.69. The total rise in the food price index in one year has been 14.7 per cent.

This situation, Mr. Speaker, did not catch the Liberal government unawares. Month after month Statistics Canada were documenting the increases in the cost of food. Yet the Minister of Finance and his colleagues in the cabinet did not consider it of sufficient importance to recall parliament this summer to deal with the cost of living. While the cost of feeding a family has been mounting, the government has been procrastinating.