

*Family Allowances Act, 1973*

reason to support a measure like this. The fact is that Canadians have lost faith in the ability of the Government to resolve the problems that exist in Canada. They are starting to recognize that these kinds of solutions are not solutions, but merely a pretext. They are a public fraud.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare stands up in the House and tries to convince Members and the Canadian people that the Government is doing something right in this case; that by cutting back in this minute way on a small benefit, in talking about amounts like \$1.61 per child per family, we are doing something to save the Canadian economy; that by applying the so-called six and five program in this way, some good is going to come about.

I am no economist, Mr. Speaker, but the people of Canada are not qualified as economists either. I do not think anybody really believes that. I do not think there is one person in this country, other than on the Government benches, who really believes that these kinds of measures are going to have any real effect on the economy of Canada. They will simply cause difficulty for those Canadian families who require this money. They will do nothing to advance or change the course of financial transactions or anything else related to the economy.

What we are dealing with, in a sense, is a public fraud. The Government of Canada, under the Prime Minister, has said, "We are going to deal with the problems that we created. We have now a policy that will reduce inflation. That is the great enemy in Canada. If we reduce inflation, we reduce interest rates; if we reduce interest rate, the economy will pick up and create jobs and opportunities for Canadians."

What are we to say to a Government which perpetrates that kind of fraud on the Parliament of Canada and on the people of Canada? How could this measure possibly change the course of the economy in Canada? It is nothing more than the word we are not allowed to use in Parliament but I can use it in another context. It is fraud. It is fraudulent. It is not going to accomplish anything.

What the Government of Canada is doing through the medium of the Minister of National Health and Welfare—whom I could easily believe is once again a dupe in this process because her knowledge in other fields is at such a low level that I can understand how her officials could convince her of the rightness of her course—what the Government is really trying to do is to create the idea and the perception that the Government is moving to solve the problems in the economy but cutting back on social service payments.

That only applies to the Canadian families affected by the cutbacks in family allowance, it applies to the health care system, the educational system and to senior citizens. There is an idea abroad in Canada that we have spent too much of the national resource on social services. There may be some basis for that idea, but what the Government of Canada is not doing is coming to grips with the real problem. It is reassessing its priorities and reassessing its ability as a Government to provide social services. It is dipping in here and there under the guise of an over-all policy called six and five. It is changing

this provision and that benefit and so on, to try to pretend to Canadians that it has a plan to solve the problems in Canada.

Let me switch to the economy and say that when there is a deficit in current spending of \$26 billion and when that is added to a debt, to bring the total debt for Canada to over \$130 billion, it must be recognized that some action has to be taken. There is no way that working Canadians across the country, 10 or 11 million of them in this fiscal year, can incur, as individuals, a further debt of over \$1,000. That is the effect of a deficit of \$26 billion spread over the work force in Canada.

We realize that something has to be done to stop that. What has to be done is to take effective economic action, not merely taking \$100 million away from families through the reduction of the indexing of family allowances.

We are talking about a Government that is losing \$500 million in the postal service when we could actually have a postal service that produces revenue. We are talking about a Government that over-spends by \$300 million on a program to market dairy products. We are talking about a Government that loses \$1 million per week or \$52 million per year, on an airport in the Province of Quebec. Yet that same Government comes to the House of Commons saying, "We can accomplish something by cutting back to the extent of \$1.61 per month on The Family Allowance."

I defy any Member of the Government to justify that kind of action. I defy any Member of the Government to stand up in this House and say that they agree with that kind of action.

If the Government wants to save \$100 million and reduce inflationary pressures through Government spending, I am sure it could find ways, if it used any kind of good sense or imagination to do so, and probably save another \$200 million or \$300 million, without affecting children, old age pensioners and senior citizens.

It does not want to do that. It wants to create a drama and say, "We are cutting back so hard that we are getting right to senior citizens and children right across Canada. That is how close we are budgeting. That is how fine we are cutting expenditures."

It is a fraud, Mr. Speaker, and I will tell you why. The six and five program hits 500,000 civil servants across Canada. The Government says it will cut salary increases to six and five, but what does it do with Michael Pitfield, the Clerk of the Executive Council? It gives him a 6 per cent increase so that he draws over \$100,000. That is not all. It signs a separation contract with him and says, "Mr. Pitfield, when you leave the service of the Government of Canada, you have a pension for life." That is what it does with the public funds. I realize that when you add up the benefits to Mr. Pitfield, they only amount to a quarter of a million dollars. That is all Mr. Pitfield gets out of this Government for the ten or 12 years of service he has given it. It is a pittance. It does not make any difference, I realize that. It is the example. What it is willing to do for Mr. Michael Pitfield is to give him a quarter of a million dollars, but here is what it is willing to do for the children across