

*Income Tax Act*

administrative costs and allowing people to receive something owed to them rather than charity.

I can state that I am working with other colleagues and this will be one of the subjects on the agenda, the guaranteed annual income formula, and also the development of a policy for senior citizens.

[*English*]

**Mr. Redway:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member was highly critical of the Government's policy with regard to income support programs for families. Of course, he is aware that family income support programs at the federal level are made up of three parts. One is the child tax exemption in the Income Tax Act, the second is the family allowance, and the third is the child tax credit.

● (1720)

He is also aware that the former Government, of which he was a strong supporter, had put a system in place in which families with higher incomes benefited more from the combined effect of those three programs than lower income families. He is also aware that the changes that have been made by the present Government have ensured that lower income families benefit more from these programs than do higher income families.

Does the Hon. Member believe that higher income families should benefit more from the income support programs for families than lower income families? Why did the former Government not prepay child tax credits as he is advocating now? Third, will he tell us if it is the official policy of his Party to introduce immediately a guaranteed annual income and scrap all of these programs?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Malépart:** Mr. Speaker, to reply first to the question, I think that the Hon. Member should be well informed and should know that all social programs now in effect were developed under the Liberal Government. However, we are not here to play politics but all of those programs should be amended taking into account their effectiveness, their use or the changing population.

I think that he was quite right when he said that there were three formulas for assisting families. It is true that the Government has attempted to reduce the funds earmarked for the rich but it forgot to transfer them to low- and medium-income families.

Such is the difference between a Liberal and a Conservative and I am under the impression, as shown by the figures, that one has to be really poor to be considered as poor and in need of help by a Conservative and such help is then equivalent to charity. For a Liberal, the distribution of wealth is made with a sense of dignity.

That is why the income is now set at \$15,000 and according to the Conservatives, I do not know what the Member thinks

of it, a family with such an income is poor while other families with an income of \$23,000 are rich. However, conditions have not been changed for those who earn \$100,000, who can use tax shelters and are entitled to a tax credit which reduces their income.

Concerning the guaranteed annual income referred to by the Hon. Member, I wish to emphasize that, no matter the political affiliation, we should strive continually to improve our income security programs, manpower training programs and policies. We are well aware that in 1990 there will be a greater number of senior citizens. Life expectancy is constantly increasing. In our ridings, there are senior citizens who are 80 or 82 years of age and they are still cavorting on the dance floor. Some 20 or 30 years ago, such people were perhaps in homes for the aged. Nowadays, they are full of energy, and we will soon have to consider housing policies for these people. We can see people living in traditional homes. When they reach a certain age, people want to live in some form of collective home with their peers; yet, there comes a time when their health fails them and they need extended care institutions.

Accordingly, I think that the various levels of government will have to seek together new ways to face a decreasing birth rate and changes in industrial production. In 1990 or 1995, there will be fewer people working to support those not working. Nowadays, we are in charge and we must be careful to make ends meet, so that when the time comes for us or our children to retire, there might be enough money for us to enjoy a decent living.

I think the debate on abortion is gaining momentum, but if we do not do anything to prepare for retirement the debate in the years 1990 and 2000 will be on a different issue: Do we endorse mercy killing because older people are becoming a heavy financial burden? What are we going to do? Our revenue sources have dried up.

If we want to act responsibly, I suggest we begin to look into this problem.

[*English*]

**Mr. Redway:** Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to hear the Hon. Member indicate that none of us are here to be partisan. I certainly expect I will remind the Hon. Member of that on occasion in the future.

I also do not believe that we are here to create fog and smog. Perhaps the Hon. Member would address himself to my question. Is it presently the official policy of his Party to introduce immediately a guaranteed annual income?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Malépart:** Mr. Speaker, I think I said that we are not prepared to come up with a guaranteed income formula because this is not the kind of measure which can be implemented overnight. I would not want the Liberal Party to behave as the Conservative Party did with respect to consultation on the Blue Paper: they made lofty promises then turned around and did the opposite. In my opinion, and I am sure the