

Family Allowances

with low incomes and the other half of people who are professionals, working in the field to ease poverty—approved the new tax credit.

I did notice a few small errors, but I have not checked the figures. I do not recall the errors I noticed, but they were not important to the people working on the bill. For instance, I do not think that the council knew that the concept was based on net income. They may have thought that the tax credit would be subtracted from taxes and owed by fathers, which is not the case. If taxes are owed by fathers, the income tax people will get after them in the usual way and in a separate operation. Once again, I did not check the figures as to their accuracy, but the officials consider the work of the council to be satisfactory.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I have now had an opportunity to review the copy of the schedule which the parliamentary secretary gave to us, and which presumably will appear in *Hansard*. Frankly, it is totally unacceptable. It gives us no more additional information than the Minister of Finance gave us earlier. What I am requesting is a meaningful presentation that shows the basis upon which the various figures were arrived at. When the Minister of Finance says that there is to be a tax cut amounting to some \$810 million, I think the House is entitled to know how many people are involved and the basis for that figure. This House is entitled to find out, for example, with regard to the \$690 million saving in family allowances, how many taxpayers are involved and what income levels are considered in the act. This information is available. The reason I feel that we should strongly request this information, is that this is the only way we can make a reasonable forecast as to what the impact of these measures will be in the coming years.

● (2152)

Frankly, Mr. Chairman, the fact that we are living with this deficit of almost \$12 billion is partly due to the ad hoc approach of this government, to hundreds of millions of dollars of expenditures. For them to come before this committee so ill-prepared to justify their request is unacceptable, to put it mildly.

Miss Bégin: Mr. Chairman, I should like to clarify one point. The last accusation made by the hon. member for York-Simcoe is unacceptable. He speaks of ad hockery without any reason whatsoever. As we have never seen him in social policies, it is understandable he does not know what goes on.

I should like to tell him a few facts which are public knowledge. Two years ago the first interdepartmental task force of finance, revenue and national health and welfare was created and put to work on this particular problem, of eventually replacing the tax exemptions by tax credits for the children of Canada. Then in August or September when I first became minister, the second task force was appointed to continue that work in more detail. The report was finished in March. This is public knowledge so I do not understand what the hon. member means when he speaks of ad hockery.

[Miss Bégin.]

I do not want to insult the hon. member by answering in lieu of my colleague, but he did not tell the parliamentary secretary and he did not tell me what information he wanted. Now he says he wants us to do the calculation. We can give him the number of children in Canada times 12 months a year, plus the savings per year. That is easy to do and he should be able to do it himself. If he does not have the elementary facts which appear in our proceedings, we will provide them to him.

The Chairman: Order, please. The hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Chairman, the minister indicated that the mother will receive the monthly cheque for \$20 as well as the \$200 maximum per year for every child. I should like to ask the minister to confirm whether the cheque will be paid to the mother. Also, if marriage breakdown has occurred and the father has gained custody of the children through court action, who will then receive the family allowance cheque?

Miss Bégin: Mr. Chairman, I have answered that question a few times already, but I think it is important to clarify it. Mothers will receive the cheque for the new child tax credit in all cases where mothers already receive the family allowance. In the second instance the hon. member raised, where the father or any other person has the legal custody of the child, that person will receive the tax credit for the child.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I should like to come back to the line of questioning I was pursuing because I think the minister misunderstands my point. Nobody disagrees with the compassionate side of what we are talking about tonight, but I think we owe it not only to the House but to the people of Canada to understand exactly the impact of these amendments on the revenue of this nation. I should like to ask the parliamentary secretary to supply us with the background information that presumably was prepared to arrive at the various estimates set out in the initial speech of the Minister of Finance concerning this bill.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member has served on many committees of this House and I have served on some of them with him. I think we are all quite used to the fact that when you receive figures on schedules you normally accept those schedules and do not obtain the various working calculations behind them. If we did, we would be faced with a multitude of figures for each of the committees and for every report from the private sector.

I submit that the detail of the changes are shown on the schedule. That is what we are looking at. It seems unreasonable to suggest we should come up with all the detailed working papers and computer runs that would be necessary to attach to *Hansard* in order to give the hon. member the type of background information I assume he is seeking.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I wish the parliamentary secretary and the minister would get their act together. The minister just finished telling me that what I was asking was of such an elementary nature that I could put the numbers together