

Family Allowances Act

asked for. We realize that the opposition would take advantage of the opportunity to claim that we were illogical if, on the one hand, we were pleased to raise the benefits already granted by the government, while asking, on the other, for substantial tax reductions in the budget prepared by the same government.

I had to state these facts in order to make the situation clear. Inasmuch as we are concerned, I do not wish—although I could accept such a responsibility—to put my hon. friends and especially my constituents under the impression that I am not always willing to ask the government to consider measures which would be beneficial to my constituents. Nor do I wish it to be charged that we, on this side of the house, refuse to face these problems when, on the contrary, it is this very government that has found the best remedy to apply in the circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is five o'clock. Before concluding I wish to voice all the confidence I have in the present government leadership, in the cabinet itself and more particularly in the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I do not doubt in the least that, as we have done in the past, we will, whenever circumstances allow, whenever we are in a position to help those who depend on us, prepare and implement measures calculated to relieve those who, socially, look up to the government.

Mr. Speaker, is it five o'clock?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I wish to point out to the hon. member that today we go on until six. We are not interrupting the present debate to study public or private bills; we are going on until six o'clock.

Mr. Dupuis: In any case, Mr. Speaker, I now close my remarks. I merely wanted to know whether my time had expired. After all, the member for St. Mary can be fair in his own good time. I do not want to depart from the rules of the house.

I wish to thank the government for all it has done up to now in order to help those who are in need, and I am confident that it will manage to settle this question of family allowances to the satisfaction of all concerned.

(Text):

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the motion before the house reads:

That, in the opinion of this house, the government should give consideration to the advisability of introducing legislation increasing the amounts paid under the Family Allowances Act to the extent

necessary to compensate for the increase in the cost of living since the said act was first enacted.

No one has suggested, and I am sure no one will suggest, that the government takes issue with the principle of the suggestion involved. Certainly to oppose this resolution, as I shall, for the reasons I shall give, will not justify anyone in saying that the administration or the supporters of the government in the house do not believe in the principle of family allowances.

The principle of family allowances, embodied in an act introduced by the present government of Canada, has been referred to by a number of important individuals, such as Miss Kathleen F. Lenroot, chief of the United States children's bureau, as one of the greatest social acts of its kind; by Dr. Evelyn Burns, of the New York school of social work, as a magnificent measure; by R. E. G. Davis, executive director of the Canadian Welfare Council, as the cornerstone of Canada's social security program, and by Dorothy Thompson, who referred to the act as the most significant social legislation in the Americas.

This was legislation introduced by this government, without any suggestion of a parliamentary committee; and, in spite of all that may be said by some opposite who claim some credit, the fact is that the first suggestion for family allowances was made in this country by a Liberal member sitting on this side of the house at least eighteen years ago.

I make this reference lest anyone who should read *Hansard*, or the report of this debate, and who is not familiar with the earlier history, should conclude that we were not sympathetic to family allowances. This may not be the moment, but we will not fail to recall that when family allowances were introduced nine years ago there was certainly strong opposition from certain sections of the opposition. Not only was there opposition in the house, but there was strong opposition elsewhere against the measure, in other parts of Canada, and by political leaders of parties not represented by those who support the government of the day.

It is true that at the present time everyone in the house seems to be strongly in favour of the Family Allowances Act. That confirms perhaps not only the wisdom of the act, but also the good judgment of the government of the day which, in the face of strong opposition, decided to introduce the measure. And I should like to say at this juncture—and perhaps it should have been said long ago—that the name of the late Dr. Clark, deputy minister of finance, who passed away