

cent over the same period last year when it was only \$12 million. This year the Metric Commission will spend \$26 million. Congratulations to the Liberals, who have abolished the Metric Commission and told them the truth, that they have walked their last kilometer.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to bring to the attention of the House that we are in the question period, there is an opportunity for Liberal Members to defend this policy but we have not yet heard from a Member from the Government side since the opening speech this morning. We are not hearing any questions, and I am wondering if they are accepting what we have to say on this side of the House, if they are in the process of changing their mind or whether they are being silent for some other reason.

• (1550)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The Chair has to indicate to the Hon. Member and to the House that that is not a point of order. However, it fits perfectly into comment, which is quite permitted by the procedures. The Hon. Member has in fact been recognized for the purpose of making a comment relating to the preceding Member's speech. Are there any other comments or questions?

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the speech of the Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) and simply reinforce to the House the basic theme of the third Member who spoke to us today. There are choices in the system, there are expenditure choices in the system. He identified a great many of them. We do not have to sock it to the pensioners or to the children of the country. We can decide to save money in other areas and put it into the pockets of families and pensioners.

The second speaker for our side today made the point that he proposed a brand new set of ideas which in a sense takes moneys that are given to families and gives more of it to the poorer segments of society—give more of it to the children who need it and less to the children of parents who do not need that support.

In my original speech in the House I think I identified for the Chamber the fact that support for children today, because of the changes made by the Minister, does two things. It provides maximum support for families which have about \$40,000 per year gross income. If they have an income of \$10,000 or \$12,000 per year, they obtain less out of the system. Also I pointed out that in 1976 the Liberal Government deindexed the Family Allowance for a year, in 1978 it reduced the payments from \$28 to \$20 a month, and here we were in 1982 getting capping for two more years. There is a systematic attempt on the part of the Liberal Government to reduce support to families and in fact to transfer responsibility for that support away from the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) and toward the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde).

We on this side of the House find it particularly objectionable that an already overburdened Minister such as the

Family Allowances Act, 1973

Minister of Finance, a very important Ministry, should suddenly be seen as the agent most responsible for family policy in the country. We think family policy belongs quite naturally under the Minister of National Health and Welfare and under the Standing Committee of the House, and that when we are talking about family policy we should be talking about it basically in that forum. Also we think that the economic committees of the House of the Minister of Finance should not be dealing with family policy. They should be dealing with policy elements which would get the economy going again so that we could create jobs and return to providing the kind of family support that comes from the workplace, and which the country really needs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The Hon. Minister—the Hon. Member for Lincoln (Mr. Mackasey).

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Lincoln): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your Freudian slip. I want to address myself to the business at hand, third reading of Bill C-132. However, I say to the Hon. Member who just sat down that he has shown in recent weeks by his interventions a propensity to try to have the best of both worlds. I can recall from reading *Hansard*, as I like to do, that the main issue to which the Hon. Member used to speak eloquently in the House was inflation. Speaker after speaker after speaker quite properly castigated the Government for the fact that there was every evidence that inflation was running away in this country as it was in the United States and in the industrialized nations of the world. The challenge to the Government was to face up to it and do something about it.

Now that it is evident we took that challenge, now that it is evident the six and five program is successful, and now that it is evident inflation is so low that the impact on Family Allowances and pensions is indeed minimal, Hon. Members opposite are trying to create the false impression that somehow this Party is selecting a particular group of helpless people to be affected more adversely than others.

If there is one thing which distinguishes this Party from the Official Opposition, it is our concern and compassion for people. Every piece of social legislation on the books of the country—Family Allowance, old age pension, unemployment insurance, Canada Pension Plan and medicare—stem from this Government when we were in power, not from the Opposition. If one wants to see a mismatch on fighting inflation, if one wants to see how the Tories handle it, then one should look at the record of Margaret Thatcher with unemployment of 15, 16 and 17 per cent, galloping inflation and virtually no social programs in place. This is what we get from Tory Governments which have the freedom of a centralized Government to practise old fashion Toryism at its best or at its worst.

I do not intend to rise to the bait and answer the simplistic argument of the Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) that somehow inflation would disappear if we cut out Government waste. What a simplistic approach! But it is consistent with the Conservatives of the country whose answer to inflation some years ago, some months ago, some weeks ago, was