

even now he take this bill back to the drawingboard. The minister has great confidence that the administration of this legislation can be simplified and can be made to run smoothly, but I suggest to him that the additional length of time the deputy minister has already indicated will elapse before the act can be put into force is an indication of what will obtain during the entire life of this legislation if it is put on the statute books. I used the phrase "entire life" as though the legislation might be on the statute books for a considerable period of time. I doubt that it will. I suspect that within two or three years whatever government is in power will be coming back to Parliament asking for drastic changes in this legislation.

When one considers the number of changes that take place in the experience of an average family in the course of a year, when one realizes that these changes have a bearing on the amount of benefits available to a family under this legislation, I suggest there is no possibility of the legislation operating on this simplified basis. Every time there is a change in the income of a family, a problem arises as to the amount of benefit. The income can change because the breadwinner's wages or salary go up or down. The income can change because there is unemployment and reliance on unemployment insurance, followed by employment. The income can change because the mother goes out to work for a while, then ceases to work, and then goes out to work again. True, there are some families whose incomes are more or less static the year round. There are people on salaries, people in the upper brackets, who have some continuity in that regard, but most of the working people and those who are not working at all who will be affected by this legislation live on incomes that fluctuate a great deal during the course of a year.

• (1140)

There is also, of course, the question of the number of children in the family—this can change—and then there is the change through the years in the ages of the children. Add to this the requirements in this legislation for reports, add to it the time factors, and I suggest it will require a tremendous amount of technology to build a computer that will cope with the situation, and even after the computer has been built there is the human problem of dealing with individuals.

I think the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) is quite right to point out that the original estimate as to how long it would take to get the program started had to be extended considerably a month or two ago. It is clear, now, that there will be no payment under this legislation until the summer of 1973; it will take that long to get started because of the complicated mess in this legislation. That mess will continue until whatever government is over there has the sense and courage to admit it has made a mistake and return to the simpler method which has existed under the Family Allowances Act. The government is putting the people of Canada into an unholy situation by trying to impose the conditions necessary to qualify for this benefit, especially considering the fact that we have handled this matter in a progressive way for 27 or 28 years. Even at this late stage I urge the minister to take this bill back to the drawing board.

25319—38½

• Family Income Security Plan

Mr. Ambrose Hubert Peddle (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to deal with this matter at great length. I would emphasize that this proposal began with a white paper in 1970. It took legislative form in 1971 at which time the government set an implementation date, which was to be May of this year. I cannot understand upon what basis the minister can now say, that certain factors had not been taken into consideration. It amounts to an admission of incompetence and lack of foresight.

The minister tried to put some of the blame on the opposition. I would remind him that the Official Opposition offered on a number of occasions to sit through the normal Christmas recess to ensure that this legislation was put through. But that offer was rejected. The government has an obligation to the people of Canada who have budgeted one way or another with this legislation in mind. The people who would have benefited have allowed for the benefits in their budgets and the people who would lose by it have also taken that eventuality into consideration. The amendment is well taken because it pinpoints the promise the government made to put this measure into effect by May. In my view the government has no alternative but to see that it is backdated to that date.

I can see only one reason for this vacillation. It is that the government wishes to get the best of both worlds. It does not want to offend the million or so families who will be cut out of this plan, yet it wants to continue to hold out a promise to those who will benefit. So it has decided to put the whole thing off until after the next election. I believe the government should show more courage and finally put this thing into pay through the people of Canada, and stand by their own legislation.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.
And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to section 11 of Standing Order 75, the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe) moved:

That Bill C-170, an act to provide for the payment of benefits in respect of children, be amended by deleting from subclause (5)(1) lines 26 to 31 on page five, and substituting the following:

"(1.1) Benefits paid in respect of children and persons referred to in subsection (3)(1) shall be applied exclusively toward the maintenance, care, training, education or advancement of the children or persons in respect of whom they were paid."

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this amendment is to provide that the benefits are paid in trust to the parent for the maintenance, care, training, education or advancement of the child or person in respect of whom they are paid. Family allowances and youth allowances were paid on a trust basis. The government has removed this trust in favour of the child. The government has put in an amend-