

though they involved tough decisions and brought about some criticism. This was expected and anticipated at the time the decisions were taken.

If we in this country are to have adequate shelter from the weather, we must be assured of an adequate supply of heating fuels at a reasonable price. For without fuel, in this climate we indeed have no adequate shelter. The actions taken by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) to effect the continued supply of heating oils to Canadians at a fair price was the right decision for Canada and for Canadians, and was taken notwithstanding the fact that it could be anticipated that it would be subject to much criticism from some areas within our country. These steps were taken to ensure that all Canadians could heat their homes and could afford to pay for such heat. We all know that rising prices are a world wide problem and that every Canadian, to some degree or another, has felt the adverse effects of this trend.

● (1850)

Similar to the steps taken to ensure adequate heating fuels, this government has taken measures to reduce the cost of basic foods and to help maintain the stability of supply and prices. These steps include the payment of a subsidy of \$1.25 per bushel of wheat consumed by Canadians and to guarantee a payment of five cents per quart on milk to the provinces where marketing boards will agree to maintain or reduce the cost of milk for at least one year. On September 4, when speaking of measures to deal with costs of living, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) stated: "In present world conditions the most urgent task of the government is to ensure that those who are least able to defend themselves against the effects of inflation are protected. This has been a fundamental objective of the government."

The increases proposed by this bill, Mr. Speaker, which will effectively triple family allowances will be welcomed I am sure by most Canadians. They will, in the words of the Prime Minister, assist those who cannot so easily assist themselves. The provisions of this bill will enable parents to better provide the necessities of life for themselves and their children. By providing more economic stability for the family unit, we will strengthen that unit, the cornerstone of our society and help to keep families together. Since the inception of family allowances in 1945, mothers across Canada and in this community have awaited the arrival of the family allowance cheque and have used it wisely to benefit their children and their families.

The additional funds being provided by this bill will enable these same mothers to provide even more for the welfare, education and health of their children. This parliament, by the adoption of this bill, has a great opportunity to provide much needed economic assistance through increases in family allowances, to solidify and strengthen the family unit in Canada and help provide for the needs of the young.

I trust all members will support the immediate benefits and long-range objectives of this exemplary piece of legislation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Family Allowances

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, following the speech delivered by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), I am very happy to take part in this debate which is of vital importance for the well-being and the survival of Canadian families.

In referring to statistics published in March 1973, I say that the country had the following number of children: 3,863,678 under 10 years, 2,781,580 between 10 and 15 and 513,710 aged 16 and 17. The cost of family allowances in September 1973 was for the first group about \$23,180,000; for the second group, \$22,252,000, and for the third group, \$5,147,000. The total cost reached \$50,571,808.

With the increase, the allowance being \$12 per child, the costs for October will be as follows: For the first group, \$46 million, for the second, \$33 million and for the third, \$6 million, for a grand total of \$85,907,616, which is an increase of \$35,335,808.

This is undoubtedly a wonderful increase, Mr. Speaker, but I do not think it meets the needs now arising from the higher cost of living. Considering our bountiful production, I wish to point out quite frankly to the minister that he should have been and could be perhaps more generous towards our fine Canadian families.

If the government is really aware of the needs of Canadian families and of the will to supplement immigration by encouraging couples to carry on and by providing them with a purchasing power to that effect, we, the Social Credit, are advocating the payment of the following allowances: For the children of the first group mentioned earlier, \$30 a month, for the second, \$60 and for the third, \$90. The estimated cost would be about \$115,910,340 for the first group, \$166,894,800 for the second and \$46,233,900 for the third, a total of about \$329 million.

It should be noted that the amounts of \$30, \$60 and \$90 represent \$1, \$2 and \$3 a day respectively. It must be considered that up to the age of 9 or 10 the child stays with his parents and goes to school close to home. But from that age on he often has to go relatively far from home and in doing that he must bring his noon meal with him. Then his meals, his leisure time and his sports cost more. Too often it is difficult for the mother to balance the budget with the present allowance even though they were increased to \$12 as of October 1 last.

If a comparison is made with the amounts paid by the government to foster homes and orphanages for children of the same age the difference is enormous with what the mother gets for the same work she must do for her own children at home.

According to the statistics for the beginning of November there are presently in Canada 7,238,968 children between the ages of 0 and 17. Children represent nearly one third of the total population in Canada. Normally they depend on the father who, unfortunately, too often gets little more than a single man's salary with which he must feed his family.

If one bothers to do a little arithmetic one finds that it is not exaggerated to take roughly 3 per cent of our national production and give it to roughly 33 per cent of the population. Let us loosen up when it comes to giving to those whose mission will be to increase our vigorous