

were the creators and defenders of our social programs and senior citizens. Before the lunch break, however, I pointed out to him that the Liberals had introduced the 6 and 5 per cent limitations on Government programs, that the Liberals had frozen the child allowances in 1976, and finally, that had full indexation been in place since 1976 for the child allowance it would be \$51.83 today rather than \$31.27.

Our seniors have nothing to fear from this Government. When seniors objected to the six and five program under the Liberals, the Liberals did nothing. In comparison, when the seniors objected and pointed out the problem in our Budget in May, this Government listened, admitted its mistake and changed. That is a tremendous difference from what we saw for 20 years from the previous administration. Seniors have absolutely nothing to fear from this Government. Bill C-70 makes very simple changes. The changes are a limitation to the increases to child allowances which will only begin after inflation exceeds 3 per cent. Therefore, if inflation continues at the present rate of 4 per cent into 1986, the increase will be 94 cents less than the present system. Therefore, there will be no reduction in child allowance and, in fact, there will be a 1 per cent increase of 31 cents. That is far better than what happened under the Liberal regime when they froze child allowances in 1976. If child allowances had been fully indexed since 1976 they would be \$20.50 higher today.

● (1610)

This Bill has a twofold purpose. The first is deficit reduction, and the second is a more rational system of aiding those in greatest need.

With respect to deficit reduction, we must remember that presently we are paying \$26 billion just on interest on the debt. When we consider the total federal share for health care, old age pensions—including the OAS and GIS combined—the spouses allowance, the entire family allowance system, welfare, social assistance to the needy, the federal share for medical research, we see that all of these cost less than the \$26 billion just to pay interest on the debt. If we do not begin to slow the increase of our debt we will not be able to afford our social programs.

Second, we must not consider this measure in isolation but see it in conjunction with other packages in the Budget. We will be enhancing the child tax credit system which will in fact ensure that those at the lower end of the income scale will be receiving more money than they presently receive.

Therefore, I suggest that this is a responsible measure of deficit reduction while ensuring that those whose need is greatest will receive even greater aid from the Government. I commend this Bill for speedy passage.

[Translation]

Mr. Carlo Rossi (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak in today's debate on the intention of the Conservatives to de-index family allowances, I find it extremely difficult to accept their decision to gag the Official Opposition.

Family Allowances Act

Mr. Speaker, that is why I urge all fathers, mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers of my riding of Bourassa to get in touch with my constituency office and seek information concerning a petition which is being circulated to express opposition to the deindexation.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to thank the local newspaper *Le Point* for telling people how they can add their name to the petition.

Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that a party with such a commanding majority would appreciate that it was in its own interest to discuss and listen to the remarks and suggestions of as many Members as possible. But it can readily be seen that mum is the word among Conservatives and what the boss wants the boss gets. That fully explains the silence of Members opposite, and I direct my remarks more particularly to the Quebec Conservative Members who, during July and August, kept shouting that things would change but of course that there would be no change made in family allowances.

To my Quebec Conservative colleagues I say that now is the time to stand up and uphold the right of mothers to continue to get their family allowances.

If I were a Government Member, Mr. Speaker, I would be ashamed to face my constituents after having voted to prevent a real debate on family allowances.

Mr. Speaker, family allowances are sums of money paid to mothers in addition to wages, charitable donations and other supplements, in recognition of the expenses of families, many of whom are single-parent families. This kind of attack against Canadian mothers is tantamount to undermining the very foundations of our society.

The Progressive Conservative Government had no trouble finding and spending \$55 million to change the colour of military uniforms, but it did not have \$55 million to spend on Canadian mothers. The Progressive Conservative Government had no trouble finding and spending one billion dollars for the big lenders of the Canadian Commercial Bank but it was unable to find \$55 million for Canadian mothers. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and his Cabinet have doubled and even tripled their budget for offices and personal consultants, but the same Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, and his Cabinet were unable to find \$55 million for Canadian mothers.

Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that for the Government opposite, family allowances have no importance whatsoever. The Progressive Conservatives fail to realize that the family allowance payments made to Canadians reflect, above all, a concept of social justice. And that concept, Mr. Speaker, is totally absent on the other side. If they had the slightest notion of social justice and responsibility, Canadian men and women would not have found tainted tuna on foodstore shelves. If they knew what social justice meant, they would never have tried to deindex Old Age Security pensions. If they knew what social justice meant, they would never have decided to deindex