

The reason I think this proposal of a once-a-year lump sum, at least for a beginning, is based on sound common sense and good housekeeping practices is that that sum of money is going to arrive in the spring.

**Mr. Epp:** Just before the election.

**Mrs. Appolloni:** Unfortunately, children do not have the vote.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Theirs mothers do.

**Mrs. Appolloni:** If children did have the vote, I would be a shoo-in. As I was saying, this lump sum will come in the spring, election or not. Hopefully we will not have an election every year. Hopefully spring will come once a year. Spring is the time of the year to do the best shopping. It is that simple. People who have young children take advantage of spring sales to refurbish children's wardrobes for the following winter. People buy one or two sizes larger than what is required. That is common sense. It is not poetic; it is somewhat mundane, but we talking about things which are more mundane: the safety, health and improvement of conditions for children in this country. On that ground alone the government has acted not out of arrogance but with common sense.

If at a later stage some mothers decide that they would like to have their benefits prorated, that is fine. The government is not saying that cannot be done. The minister has said there will be flexibility, as there should be. I mention this just to point out that we are in grave danger of losing sight of the real issue behind this legislation. For the first time in many years we are offering to the poor of this country a beacon of hope which is really needed. Let us not blacken out that beacon with spurious charges of misuse of words and with legalities. Let us not charge that women will be offended because they will have to ask for their husband's signatures on a form.

We have been talking about the family unit. Marvellous words have been used to describe the family unit and its importance to Canadian society. As a member of a family unit, I must point out—and I think I speak for every mother in this country—that when it comes to necessities for my children and when it comes to benefits for them, I am not ashamed to ask for my husband's signature, and I do not think he thinks less of me if I do.

Some feminists are up in arms. They went to the commissioner of human rights. They stormed to his door asking what we are doing to the women of this country. I wonder who those women are.

The hon. member for Kingston and The Islands is very incensed by this measure. If she is so incensed, why does she not call a convention in Ottawa for all mothers in this country who object to this measure? I suggest that that convention would not cost her a red penny because it could be held in any telephone booth in this city.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### *Family Allowances*

**Mr. Epp:** Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions to ask of the minister. I do not intend to comment on the remarks made by the member who just preceded me. In reply to the hon. member for Kingston and The Islands the minister indicated that she had been in contact with a number of women's group and that they endorse the legislation in the form it is now before us. As recorded at page 758 of *Hansard* for yesterday, the minister said in reply to the hon. member for Kingston and The Islands, and I quote:

There are just a few more points in order to clarify this matter. The federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women approved wholeheartedly of this reform, and made that approval known by a resolution of the complete council, as well as through numerous speeches and meetings. I have met with many women's groups all of which approve of this reform. Some of them regretted, as I do and as I have said often, the reduction in universal family allowances.

I wonder if the minister can tell us whether there was also correspondence from these groups endorsing this measure. The minister said that there was support from these groups. Was there any correspondence, and would the minister be willing to table it?

I wonder if the minister or the parliamentary secretary can indicate the amount of time which must elapse before a person can get a social insurance number; that is, the time lapse between the point at which a valid application is received and the point at which a social insurance number is received. This legislation will require persons to apply for social insurance numbers. A number of mothers will not have filed income tax returns before, and in order to file income tax returns they will need social insurance numbers. In her presentation the minister repeatedly said that there is no great difficulty in getting social insurance numbers. We have discussed this question for some time in the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration. There is a long time lapse between the time a person applies and the time a person gets a social insurance number. The Minister of Employment and Immigration has often repeated that one reason for that is that there is now closer scrutiny of applications.

I want to debate that with the Minister of Employment and Immigration at some other time in order to follow that argument to its logical conclusion, but for now I will ask the parliamentary secretary how much time elapses before a person can get a social insurance number. Because it is my understanding that this takes a considerable amount of time. I think that should be clarified.

Yesterday in reply to a question the Minister of National Health and Welfare indicated that the lump sum payment of \$200 maximum per child per year would be non-taxable. I believe I understood her correctly. I do not think that is the case, however, I would like to have clarification as to whether that lump sum payment is taxable, for example, if a mother who has a taxable income is filing an income tax return.

● (1552)

For example, if, for argument's sake, a mother is getting \$5,000 and the total family income is below \$18,000, and therefore she gets \$200 per child, does the mother pay tax on