

Mothers Allowances

poverty, if their children can stand up to being badly clothed, badly fed and the tauntings and sneers of the other children. That is not good enough in the kind of society we live in. Today we sink or swim together.

Today we must protect the family or accept the consequences of broken homes and badly behaved children, not only at home but in the community where their behaviour is a very serious thing, particularly in later years as adults.

Let me quote from a letter written by a widow who moved to British Columbia when her husband died. She says:

Our three years here have been a triumph over circumstances in many ways, in that I have proven wrong all those who maintained it could not be done. I have worked day and night to keep my family together and have often wondered if I have not paid too high a price—if the whole family structure has not been too weakened simply because I must spread myself too thinly. I have tried everything I know to supplement a welcome but inadequate pay check and it is never enough. My children are inadequately clothed and often inadequately fed. I don't know what a new dress for myself looks like—all of my clothes have been passed on by relatives. I've tried door to door selling when I was already tired, discouraged and often half ill. For some time now I have been a civil servant by day, and a licensed private detective by night. Even this extra work is spasmodic and I never know how many hours work I can expect. I cannot let my night work interfere with my regular job and am thus limited in what I can do.

Please do not misunderstand me—I enjoy all of my work and am stimulated by it—yet I am also aware that it is too much to expect of any woman.

What a life to expect of any woman. I do not think we should permit this thing to on, and I do not think we can afford to allow it to continue. I have purposely taken the case of this woman because she is obviously resourceful, strong, resolute and with many assets. What of the many mothers across this country who are much less well endowed or able to stand up to difficulties? I do not think we can afford anything less than an assist through a procedure such as is suggested in this notice of motion, with a view to family security.

Until the recent economy drive on the part of the government we were prepared to spend \$100 millions for a defence establishment here in Ottawa—a Canadian pentagon. I suppose this would have been built over the protests of some of us, in spite of the fact we are told that today there is basically no defence, in the final analysis, against the weapons of modern warfare. In my view that would be an expenditure subject to question,

and I am certainly glad to see that the economy axe has fallen there.

• (5:20 p.m.)

We are spending on family allowances for all the families in Canada only slightly more than five times as much as that large defence establishment, which I wish I could say was scrapped. I hope the matter of paying an allowance to full time mothers will be investigated by the royal commission on the status of women that is now preparing to hold sessions. I believe it is well worth their investigation.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, I appeal to the government to give really serious consideration to my proposal. If we are serious in this country about urging mothers to make a full time job of motherhood, and we really want the family safeguarded and protected, I think it would be a good idea that where a woman chooses to go out to work she should have the right to make that choice, but that where she chooses to stay at home she be helped in order to carry out a job which I think is one of the top jobs for women in this country.

Mr. Webb: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the hon. member a question or two, if I may. Does she think that married women with families should be given jobs in factories.

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): As I said at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, I think it is the right of a woman to choose whether she shall work inside her home, whether she shall work outside or whether she shall work at a combination of both. But I suggest that we will not pass a law saying that no woman shall be given a job in a factory. If we want women to protect the home, then the way to do it, beyond any doubt in my mind, is to give them a salary for so doing. I think that faced with this situation a very great number of women would choose to stay home rather than be mentally and physically torn in pieces trying to do one job outside the home and coming home and trying to do another.

Mr. Webb: I have one more question, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tardif): Order, please. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to the hon. lady has expired.

Mr. Webb: I wonder whether the hon. lady would accept one more question. Does she not agree that if married women were home