

Family Allowances

is made at \$28 as it should be at the end of December, 1978, at \$28.80, that would still increase the Minister of Finance's forecast revenues. So, at least \$900 million in additional revenues, and all that taken out of child family allowances.

Today, I would like to congratulate the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) for being frank with the people. Indeed, in her statement of September 14, 1978, she said:

Our approach to the implementation of those changes is simple. Above all, we must be sure that we are really going to redistribute the money and not increase spending; so cuts are necessary to finance the new benefits. Then the money must be reallocated to people who need it most: old people and small wage earners with children, those who suffer most from poverty, those who need help right away. Finally, we must define the new measures taking into account our sick economy; the formula must be an incentive to work and stimulate our productivity.

After reading that first part, Mr. Speaker, I imagine the minister must not always feel at ease within her party. We admit that old people should be receiving more and that low income people should be guaranteed a minimum income. We recognize that because, for 15 years we have been calling on successive governments in this House to set up a universal guaranteed income system to do away with those millions of inspectors, investigators, auditors bureaucrats of all kinds who relentlessly harass the disabled, the sick, the poor, the unemployed and people on welfare whom they often consider as rejects because they could not benefit from political favours as many bureaucrats had a chance to do today.

People laughed at us for years. Today, the government must open its eyes and say we are right. We recognize that our sick economy must be stimulated, but we recommend that we need a formula to provide an incentive to work and strengthen our economy; we are aware of that formula we need. Our economy must absolutely be stimulated, we are aware of all that, Mr. Speaker.

But how, by which means, through what procedure? This is where our opinions differ because we will certainly not tolerate that the government stimulate the economy at the expense of our children by reducing the amount of family allowances now that it has finished robbing senior citizens by taking back their right to unemployment insurance on retirement, now that it has eroded the income of pensioners as much as possible to make them even more dependent on the state. Do you want examples? In the case of senior citizens who had purchased Quebec annuities for their old age, the federal government takes back 50 per cent by reducing by that amount their income supplement. The federal government therefore robs provincial insurance benefits. What if the senior citizen was covered by private or group insurance? Once again, the federal government takes back 50 per cent or 60 per cent, to such a point that, according to most pensioners, it is better to be broke when you retire than to have saved all your life only to be robbed by the state.

Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat concerned about another comment made by the minister to the effect that the new formula should be a work incentive and a stimulant for our productivity. I find it difficult to reconcile this concept with the one concerning senior citizens, poor children, and so on. We have to wonder if the funds created by these cut-backs will be used only for social services since we are talking about the welfare department and I was under the impression that the cutbacks would be used only within the framework of our social services. We must now wonder, Mr. Speaker, if they will be used for other purposes, as this last statement seems to indicate.

When we talk about stimulating our productivity and creating work incentives, this is a more direct concern of the employment department and I wonder whether the minister's department wants to use the sums made available under the bill to create employment for senior citizens. This would surprise me enormously. This is where I find the statement of the minister a bit vague because I cannot imagine that even if our economy is in bad shape, the minister finds the situation critical enough to eliminate essential services for our children. Even though we recognize the ills that have been denounced, we cannot accept the means suggested as a solution to all our problems. Mr. Speaker, there is so much potential in Canada to recover easily certain revenues to stimulate our economy that it is not necessary to do so at the expense of the weakest and the more defenceless among us while protecting the strongest, if that is the aim of this measure. The government is looking for funds? I believe the time has come for the government to stop looking for funds in the social sector to make up its incredible deficits and set afloat its shaky administration.

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If the government needs more revenues let it first reduce its irresponsible expenses for trips throughout the world—planetary travels as would say a certain hon. member. And if it needs \$2.5 billion, for instance, as we heard recently in this House, it should defer for five years the purchase of military aircraft it has already ordered. We do not need military aircraft to live in peace in Canada. By this suggestion the government will find more money than needed and I might make dozens of other suggestions, all perfectly realistic. Let the government go after the big monopolies it is always protecting. It should order a reduction of the interest rates it pays to chartered banks because it did not have the guts to make the monetary reforms needed to create the credits required by our country.

To conclude, I ask the government to undertake an in-depth study of this bill at the committee stage to make the amendments required on third reading as, in its present form, we consider this bill, like many others, to be anti-social, anti-familial as it gives to money capital priority over human capital on the backs of our children.