

Part of it is not just that we can isolate the poor any more. We cannot. There is a whole raft of people out there who are now being called the working poor. They are going to be extremely nasty. They are unused to being poor. They do not like it, and they will not take it very long. Some of them have come to me.

One of the things that I noticed is that in things like the collection of new taxes, most people in small business do not want to collect taxes. They make no bones about that. Some of them are simply adopting the obvious. They are saying: "Why should I bother keeping records for the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, or anybody else? Give me some money. I will fix your plumbing. Game over." I think that is going to become a national trend as it is in many jurisdictions. When people think that a tax process is unfair, when people decide that they do not want to play that sport any more, they simply do not keep the records. The government does get the tax money. They pocket \$10 less. Away we go. We will see that in more and more businesses now. Today I have seen notices on the wall: "If you want to pay by cheque, by credit card or if you want a receipt, the cost of this service is \$30 or \$20 cash". Then the taxation process becomes self-defeating. As more and more people are hit by poverty, as more and more people get crushed in that process, they will seek whatever means of redress they can to escape it.

• (1700)

The alternative will be for the Government of Canada, the government of each province, and the governments of all of our municipalities to say: "Wait a minute. We cannot afford in the long run to allow this to continue in that way". We know how to build non-profit housing. We know how to provide people with useful, productive work, we know how to get people so that they can sustain themselves with some dignity. We are very proud in this country. Sometimes I get very angry when people say: "No country in the world has a social assistance program like Canada". Baloney, lots of countries to do. People are very proud of the fact that our senior citizens get pensions. Sure, they do, but all of our systems are straining and all of our systems are failing a larger and larger group of people.

One final thing ought to be put on the record this afternoon. I recall when I was a member of the Ontario legislature going to Moosonee. It was a legislative committee and the members were a little grumbly because we had to ride the train to Moosonee. It was not

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exactly first-class travel but they were amused that the train stopped, people came out of the bush, got on, loaded on canoes and all of that. Then we went to a motel in Moosonee and they were upset there was only one television per floor, it was black and white, they locked the doors at ten o'clock and there was not a great deal for members of the legislature to do after ten o'clock at night and so they were kind of snarly.

The next day we met with people who said things like this to us. "I know people who live in mud and stick huts, who do not have a television set, who do not have a job, who do not have a pension, who do not have an education, who do not have a future. If the future is anything it is probably a bottle of cheap wine". Most of us sat back a little bit at the end of that day because we had felt very put upon, very hard pressed that we were losing our creature comfort.

Part of what perhaps needs to happen to members of this House and people in this country is simply open our eyes a little bit and look around us and see the very real problems that other Canadians are having. Arguments between political parties, about different regions of the country, all of those arguments have to take place. They are a very necessary part of political life. However, just maybe once in a while we should set all of those things aside and get at the very real problems, the very real things for which Parliament can do things; attack poverty, talk about greater issues, about what this country is supposed to do. Do we have a plan in mind to kind of get us from a problem where we are now, to identify some solutions to see if we can resolve the problem. I think that needs to be done.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of my colleague from Oshawa. He said a lot of things that I think we, as parliamentarians, have come across and have been frustrated with. For example, rules. We all see these rules that we have to put up with in these various situations. No matter what system is set up, they set up a series of rules.

They do not set up the rules, however, for the people who need the help and who use the system properly. They set up the rules for those who abuse the system. That is the unfortunate part of the whole thing. Because some people abuse the system, all of a sudden we need to have rules to make sure that they do not abuse the system. If we did not have people who abused these systems that are set up, no matter what they are,