

Government Orders

they are carrying to go through university. That is horrendous.

This legislation is only going to make far worse for those students and far worse for people who have lost their jobs because of cutbacks in the forest industry and other industries in British Columbia who are now attempting to get back in to the education system so they can be retrained and get another job. They cannot take the chance. They cannot carry that debt load. It is a disgraceful situation for those young people and for the older people who are trying to get back into the education system in British Columbia.

There are a number of devastating effects of Bill C-69 for the people of British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta, that are totally unfair. The poor in B.C. are just as poor as the poor in any other part of the country. I have been to the food banks in my community. I have been to the school lunch programs in my area. I have seen the people. No one in our society wants the humiliation of lining up, week after week, for a bag of free groceries, and even that bag is shrinking.

Some members on that side of the House seem to think that people are looking for free gifts. Those line-ups are long and the people in those line-ups to get those paltry bags of groceries are humiliated by those walking by and seeing them. They do not want to be there. If they had any other options, they would not be standing in a food bank line-up. I know that. There are now food banks in the Vancouver area simply for single moms and their children. It is shameful that this is happening our country, a wealthy country, a country that prides itself on equal opportunities for all its citizens.

The cap on the Canada Assistance Plan will affect a number of areas in our society. One of the things I hear over and over again when I question the government on its programs or, I should say, its lack of programs and lack of support for women who find themselves living in violent situations in their homes, is some kind of condescending pap from members on the government side. They tell me that they have appointed women to other positions in the government, that they have appointed women to other boards, or about the other appointments for women.

• (1720)

This cap on the Canada Assistance Plan will affect shelters for battered women. That is the federal-provincial funding mechanism for building shelters for battered women. This legislation will prevent more shelters being built and all the soft words and rhetoric of the government about caring for women who find themselves in battered situations, in violent situations, ring very hollow when looking at the real actions.

Another area that will be affected by the cap on the Canada Assistance Plan is child care, and other members have mentioned it here today. Child care is sorely lacking all across Canada, in particular in British Columbia. There are thousands of children who are not in child care situations that we know are safe and that we know have certain standards applied to them. The Canada Assistance Plan again is the mechanism for federal-provincial funding for child care and again we are seeing a limit put on that spending.

I said earlier that the poor of British Columbia are just as poor as those anywhere else in Canada. To put a ceiling on the Canada Assistance Plan is to deal a real blow to those folks. They are already living under the poverty line, already lined up at food banks, and already in a very devastating situation in their home lives.

Bill C-69 clearly shows all Canadians what the Tory agenda is. It is an agenda that we have seen over the past several years where the government has deindexed family allowances. For all its nice words about children, it has deindexed family allowances. Now it has put a clawback on family allowances and on old age pensions. Every single social program in the country has been under attack by the government. The Tory agenda is a very clear agenda. It is one that does not care about the average folks in Canada, the poor, the children, the battered and abused women and Bill C-69 points that out very clearly.

I urge all members in the House to vote against Bill C-69 and stand up for Canadians, stand up for the social safety-net that Canadians have prided themselves on for generations.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker, it seems every time one stands up in the House, one has to apologize to the Canadian people, on behalf of this Parliament, for legislation which this government has brought in and Bill C-69 is no exception to that. On