

[English]

When I say that the bill is fairly simple and deals primarily with technical things, I do not want to give the impression that it is not an important bill and that it will not lead to particularly important developments. We are not without knowing that one of the reasons, supposedly for the extension of two years, is because there will be a major review undertaken. There is a major review that is being undertaken. It is in the process of happening.

• (1610)

I suggested that review needs to be made public. The stakeholders need to be identified. We should also have a policy impact statement. The government should be telling all of us involved with the particular program, whether we talk about equalization, EPF or CAP, just what would happen from a tax point and a cash perspective, if the current trend of a reduction of transfers continues.

What are the options out there? What are the positives and negatives of the various options government could come forward with?

[Translation]

I have the distinct impression that very shortly it will be election time. I suppose we could call this pre-election time or season. Eventually, it will be the real thing.

We might also see some little games being played that might benefit the government and would not necessarily make things easier for the people who are concerned about this bill and the proposed amendments. This is an extremely important issue, and, as I said earlier, should be seen separate from the problems this government has had in many areas, including the Constitution, the economy and development of social programs. Clearly, there is a climate of suspicion. People seem to be watching and waiting for the other shoe to drop.

In concluding I would like to say that: I am willing to accept the testimony that was given in committee. I believe the people there were honourable. There are no

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hidden agendas. This is an extension of that. At the same time, I am disappointed with the process for the review of these programs. The key actors who will be involved in attempting to help government come up with a more sensitive and effective way of responding to the needs of equalization, health and education and the social assistance programs, will be reflected more accurately.

[English]

**Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to preface my remarks by commenting on the comments made by the Tory member for Carleton—Charlotte.

It is important when he talks about how well New Brunswick has done under this government's programs, what he thinks about the reduction in the ceiling that has been put on the equalization, on the projected revenues of those lower-income provinces including New Brunswick.

From 1988–89 to 1991–92, equalization ceilings reduced revenues of the lower income provinces by \$3.1 billion. Does that sound like have not provinces doing better under this government's programs? Even somebody who is able to do basic mathematics can figure out there has been a slight of hand. I find it awfully difficult to understand how the reduction of \$3.1 billion in the have not provinces can mean that those provinces are doing better. During that period, the disparity between the lower and higher income provinces widened. It actually led to a reduction from \$8.1 billion to \$7.9 billion in 1991 for those provinces.

I hope when the hon. member speaks again on matters such as this, he at least does his homework on behalf of his own province.

I would also like to respond to the comments just made by my liberal colleague from St. Boniface who pointed a finger at NDP governments. He said none of us should cast stones because somehow the NDP governments in Canada have not lived up to their commitments.