

Government Orders

provided as a result of the transfer of payments will come to an end.

Through that kind of process, you can see the unravelling of social programs, the unravelling of the country itself. When you have a reduction in transfer payments, you have a reduction of assistance to medicare. There is a reduction of assistance to secondary education. The provinces cannot bear those burdens alone. The resources of the provinces are limited. The federal government must take its responsibilities seriously. I do not think the government is doing that.

I understand why. I understand it is because of its ideology. This government really does not believe in government. If it does believe in government at all, it believes in weak, impotent government. It believes in weak, impotent, democratic institutions. Leave it to the marketplace, leave it to the private sector.

I am a champion of the private sector. The private sector does some of its jobs extremely well. When it comes to business, I say, leave business to business. It is up to us politicians to set the policies, to set the parameters, to make absolutely sure that in our daily activities, be those activities by individual Canadians, groups of Canadians or corporations, that we are always working for the common good, for the good of all of us, for the good of the country. I do not see that in the way the government is operating.

There is no great mystery about the Canada Assistance Plan. It is there to help the poorest of the poor. It is there to provide benefits to the poor and especially to children. I think it is a very sad commentary on the government, and in a way it is a sad commentary on our country, when we see the government putting a cap on this kind of assistance. It in effect says to the people of the world: "We are not going to share our resources any more. We are going to leave it to the provinces". Of course, then the provinces will turn around and say: "We'll leave it to the municipalities". That is a recipe for disaster. That is how services begin to unravel to a point where they will not exist any more.

In my closing moments, I would say to the government, look at this bill again. It is wrong in principle and it should be reconsidered, in fact, it should be just dropped completely.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-69 will cap the Canada Assistance Plan at 5 per cent until the year 1992. Bill C-32 extends that cap for another three years. This further capping is part of this government's agenda. The government says: "We must do something about the deficit", but then proceeds by making the people who can least afford to do something about the deficit contribute to the reduction of the deficit, forcing them to take a good portion of the burden.

The agenda of this government is an agenda which suggests a trickle down theory. If you feed the corporations enough, maybe they will pass some of it on to the workers. It does not work that way and it has never worked that way.

I understand the province of Ontario has added close to 300,000 people to its welfare rolls in the last year. That to a great extent has been caused by the policies which this government has put in place and the free trade deal that was passed by this government. How does it do it? It seems like a long and involved process because it happens at so many levels. A while ago it changed the UI for workers and with the free trade and other reasons, the high dollar, we have had the closing of many plants across the province. I speak of Ontario now because Ontario is one of the benefactors of this particular bill. However, the plants close so people are put out of work. The bill passed by this government has reduced the UI they will get, and it has also shortened the time that they will get it. It is harder to get UI and it runs out quicker than it did in the past. Also there are fewer jobs because there is a continuous closure of plants.

• (1600)

What does this worker do? He goes to the municipality for social assistance. So these people go on social assistance. This increases the cost of social assistance to the municipality. It increases the cost of social assistance to the province. In the past, a good many years ago, if you spent 50 cents on social assistance the federal government contributed 50 cents. However, the Liberal government in its wisdom changed that a few years ago and made it a block payment to provincial governments so that it no longer had to match the funds that the provincial government pays. Consequently it has got away with less.