

Government Orders

time those in the highest income quintile saw taxes rise only .9 per cent and those in the second highest quintile, .3 per cent.

I do not know whether that is what the government speaks of when it says in the document *Shaping Canada's Future Together* that I referred to earlier, in the Canada clause, that it will make a commitment to the well-being of all Canadians. It seems to me that the commitment that this government has made over the last seven years has been a commitment to fill the pockets of those who are most able to afford to pay their share and take from the pockets of those who are unable to speak for themselves.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to enter the debate on Bill C-32, an act to amend the Canada Assistance Plan.

This act proposes to extend the 5 per cent ceiling on the rate of growth in transfers to the Canada Assistance Plan from two years to five years. This cap is a cap on a cap considering the fact that not too long ago, in the earlier nineties, Bill C-69 was presented to the House on June 12, 1990. It was the first cap on the Canada Assistance Plan, and we are now looking at a bill, Bill C-32, which is a further cap on this cap.

The cap applies only to the provinces which do not receive the equalization payments. At present these provinces are British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. As a member from Ontario and specifically northern Ontario, a region that has high unemployment, a region that has a cycle and troughs of high unemployment, low unemployment, economic boom and bust, this particular piece of legislation will be very detrimental to the well-being of the citizens of Kenora—Rainy River.

• (1510)

I think it is important to take a look at this in its proper context. The government wishes in its propaganda and information put out to the public to suggest that what it is doing is perfectly civilized because in essence the three provinces that it is dealing with are the three richest provinces.

Let us take a look at it a lot closer and look at the amount of dollars that the government is funnelling from the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. That amount is \$2.135 billion of federal trans-

fers over the five-year period. That amount as far as Ontarians are concerned is a very conservative estimate.

The present Government of Ontario has suggested that this year alone it suspects that it will cost it about \$1 billion to replace the dollars that have been held back by the federal government because of this cap under Bill C-69 and now the cap on the cap under Bill C-32. I am sure it will be passed because of what the government is proposing to do with the usual boot. It will stop debate, force us to go as quickly as we can and allow this bill to be passed by the House of Commons and the Senate in a very short period.

What is most interesting about this whole debate is that 54 per cent of the poorest Canadians are the ones who live below the poverty line, who are on welfare already and who are unemployed. There are those who cannot seem to help themselves because they are disabled or are seniors who through no fault of their own are not able to work and are relying on the governments to look after them as we have done in the past. It think it is important to remember that 54 per cent of all Canadians in those categories are affected by this piece of legislation.

I think it is important for our constituents to know exactly what does the Canadian Assistance Plan do and what does it provide for our poorest Canadians. It provides, very succinctly, basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, utilities and household supplies. That part of the Canadian Assistance Plan is better known as the welfare side of it.

It also supplies to those Canadians who may not fall within the welfare roles but are in such a situation where they may not be able to provide dental care, and this social assistance will do that. It will provide essential living services for disabled persons, foster homes for abused children, safe housing for abused women, and subsidized child care for low income families.

As we can see, this particular piece of legislation, Bill C-32, will have a tremendous impact on the abilities of our poorest people in Ontario, our poorest people in Alberta and our poorest people in British Columbia to be able to help themselves with the very basic necessities, to pick themselves up by the bootstraps and try to get out of that continual cycle of poverty which we as a caring and loving society are trying to help them with.