

lose \$650 million over the next five years. This province has already suffered a lot from provincial cut-backs imposed by the Bennett Social Credit Government. British Columbia has already cut back education to quite a drastic degree. This will mean even more cut-backs for education. We must remember that this is at a time when the province is suffering, as are other provinces in western Canada, because of uneven economic growth in Canada and certain external forces which we find difficult to control.

● (1930)

Most economic institutes have predicted great growth in the next few years for central Canada. Informetrica and various other economic institutes have predicted a movement of people and money to central Canada, to Ontario and Quebec. I do not begrudge them that growth; I envy it, especially when it does not mean growth in the western and in the Atlantic provinces. We out West right now are getting a triple whammy.

In Saskatchewan the prices of wheat have reached historic lows. Farmers are in real difficulty. The Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) and the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) have pointed out the difficulties in Saskatchewan many times. As for the Province of Alberta, Your Honour knows that the bottom has fallen out of oil prices. They have dropped from about \$28 U.S. per barrel three months or four months ago to \$12 U.S. per barrel. That is a dramatic drop. I see Hon. Members from Alberta in the House. They could tell us, as they already have, that the Alberta economy is in trouble.

I should like to return to my Province of British Columbia. Those who have listened to Question Period will know that the Americans have placed a 35 per cent duty upon the shake and shingle industry. In fact, that has almost closed down the entire industry. It has put some 4,000 people directly involved in that industry out of work, some of whom are my constituents. It is even more difficult when the Government cuts back \$650 million in payments to the Province of British Columbia. This is why I say it is a bad time to do so.

Why is the Government doing it? I suppose it is to save money because it has to deal with its deficit. Yes, it must deal with its deficit, but I cannot help but wonder if there are other ways to deal with its deficit. One way of dealing with a deficit is to collect more money in taxes and to give less money away in tax write-offs and so on. Today's newspaper contains a story about Dome Petroleum, a huge oil company which is in financial difficulty. There is talk of selling Dome Petroleum. One of its biggest assets, next to its producing properties which are all mortgaged to the hilt by the banks, is a \$2.3 billion tax credit. In other words, it could be a tax deduction but Dome cannot take advantage of it because it is not making any money. What will Dome do with it? It will probably sell it along with the company to another company which would not have to pay \$2.3 billion in taxes to the federal Government.

The Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) has headed a New Democratic Party tax probe. That group has

travelled the country and has tried to consult with ordinary Canadians. I should like to refer to the message which that probe has been receiving, as I have attended some of its hearings. I know my friend has spoken on the matter in the House and will be reporting on it at greater length shortly. However, the message has been that the Canadian tax system is not a fair one. Most Canadians get their taxes taken right off the top of their cheques. Other Canadians, especially certain companies and so on, are not paying any taxes at all. Some rich people making a fortune are in fact not paying taxes at the same level as ordinary Canadians.

Mr. Riis: Or at all.

Mr. Waddell: Or at all. That is an area at which the federal Government could look to get more money rather than cut back on funds to the provinces which will result in cut-backs to education.

I have heard many Liberal Members quote the Chief Justice of Canada. I hesitate to quote him because I do not really think he should be brought into politics. However, he made an extraordinary speech. It came from the heart, as it comes the heart of almost every Canadian who thinks about things, that the last place we want a cut-back is in the area of education. We do not want to cut back education because if there is anything the modern world teaches us, it is that education is key to a real economic future, so that Canadians can cease to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. We have one of the best educated populations in the world, and we do not want a cut-back in that area.

Another area at which the Government could look to get money is that of the oil companies. I have sat on the Standing Committee on Energy, Mines and Resources for a number of years. From 1980—and it will be phased out at the end of next year—the Government has given the oil companies \$7.3 billion in PIP grants. I know the Conservative Government has cut that out, but the oil companies were given \$7.3 billion to drill a lot of holes. I ask Hon. Members to think what could have been done with that amount of money in terms of health care and education.

There are 70 foodbanks in Greater Vancouver. Can Your Honour believe that we have foodbanks in western Canadian cities? We do not have enough money to go around and some people cannot afford to buy food. Just the other day the Quebec Government announced that it was cutting back on payments to welfare recipients.

[Translation]

—how much money is it? I think it is \$160 a month for those who are not married, who live alone, but now policemen are going after those poor people who may have a little bit more money.

[English]

In Quebec they are chasing after single welfare recipients who are receiving \$160 per month. However, it seems strange that federally we hardly police the PIP grants which provided