

Government Orders

17.4 per cent, in 1993. This is a dramatic increase in just one year.

More importantly, child poverty reached a 14-year high by climbing up to 20.8 per cent. In 1993, there were 1,415,000 poor children in Canada. These children are poor because their parents are poor. And the parents are poor because there are not enough jobs in this country. Generally speaking, women are poorer than men. This is shameful.

• (1110)

[*English*]

Nearly half a million more Canadians became poor in 1993. The number of poor grew to nearly 4.8 million Canadians, from 4.3 million the previous year. Half a million more poor people in Canada. It is a tragic situation.

[*Translation*]

This is shocking. The government should analyse this report carefully and act on it. I ask the government to table a plan to fight poverty in Canada, and I hope more members will express their outrage about this situation: one half million new poor.

Significantly, 50 per cent of these people are working poor. In other words, they are forced to accept unusually low wages. In fact, the minimum wage is a scandal, both federally and provincially.

Although Alberta is one of the richest provinces, it has one of the lowest minimum wages in Canada: \$5 an hour. Our colleagues opposite often say we live in Canada, the best country in the world. I think that with these figures, Canada is hardly the wonderful country they say it is.

I said that this government and the Liberal Party are leaning increasingly to the right. A few days ago, we saw the passage of back-to-work legislation in the form of Bill C-77, introduced by the new Minister of Labour, legislation that is a direct attack on the unions and denies them the right to strike, just because the government wants to privatize CN and get even more money for the Treasury.

With this legislation, the government is trying to break the unions and federal employees as well, who are very disturbed about the loss of 45,000 jobs. The government is attacking social programs and the unemployed, instead of attacking unemployment.

On the other hand, the government refuses to pass anti-scab legislation as requested by the unions. Especially in Quebec, where Ogilvie, for instance, whose employees have been on strike for months and months, continues to operate because it hires scabs. Once again, I want to ask the government to introduce anti-scab legislation.

At the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, and I happen to be the official opposition critic on this matter, in 1995-96, according to the budget, spending will total \$592.7 million and the department will have the equivalent of 4,645 full-time employees, including 260 in Canadian missions abroad.

It is outrageous, and I mentioned this before in the House, that more than 50 per cent of the department's budget will be self-financing, in other words, about \$300 million will come from user fees, especially the new tax on immigration. I think the minister is trying to run his department like a private company. Today it is self-financing, and later he will probably want to make a profit as well.

There have been cuts at the IRB, cuts totalling around \$500.7 million. From now on, cases will be heard by only one commissioner, not two. The number of commissioners will be reduced from 175 to 112.

• (1115)

I would like to use the two minutes I have left to say a few words about international aid.

I condemn most vigorously the cuts made in international assistance. This country, which used to have a genuine concern for the problems and well-being of poor countries is no longer the Canada I knew a number of years ago. There have been horrendous cuts in Montreal alone, and in the rest of Quebec and Canada. More than 80 organizations dedicated to promoting public awareness of international assistance will see their funding cut by 100 per cent and will disappear. Cuts totalling \$1.3 billion in three years—that is a lot of money. The UN has asked all industrialized countries to spend 0.7 per cent of GDP on international assistance. Canada will be left with a rate of 0.3 per cent.

Finally, I would urge the government not to reduce the programs for older worker adjustment. The unions are very concerned, and the provinces as well. These agreements must be renewed, and I hope the government will try to do something for these workers.

[*English*]

Mr. Cliff Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak in the House on behalf of my constituents about the federal budget.

My constituents tell me time and time again that they are sick and tired of paying for federal government programs that they do not want, they did not ask for and they certainly do not want to pay for. My constituents stop me and ask about Canada's official languages policy. Why do we have this program? Why do we have to pay for it? Today I will confine my budget remarks to bring forward the concerns of my constituents about official languages.

I will start by asking the government on behalf of the people of Yellowhead: Why do we have a Department of Canadian Heritage? Of all the departments in government, the Department of Canadian Heritage is one of the most controversial and