

people. It said further that the unemployment we have is not necessary, that we have the unemployment because we have a bad way of arranging our public affairs. Of course, some people got upset and said that the bishops should not talk about public affairs; they should just talk about heaven or hell or some place that does not matter to politicians. In fact, the bishops won a great deal of attention in this country for their statement. They won a great deal of attention for declaring a principle which has been part of the teaching of their church in recent years called the preferential option for the poor. The general principle is that when you have a choice between helping the rich and the poor, you help the poor.

**An Hon. Member:** The rich get richer.

**Mr. Heap:** Somebody beside me here, on my nominal left but obviously much to the right in terms of politics, advocates the rich getting richer. What the bishops advocated was to make the poor a little richer, even if it means that the rich become a little poorer or, as is more likely, they do not become any richer quite so fast. This is a principle that was made more famous in other countries than Canada, and I will come to that. In general they argued that it is not only better on moral grounds—that is because the poor need the money or need the food or need the housing more than the rich do; that is obvious—but they also argued that it is better on practical grounds because what the poor would have to get would be, for the most part, necessities rather than luxuries. This even applies more deeply in a country that is developing its savings, its capital resources. It develops it for providing the necessities for a broad market, it is more stable and can more reliably provide and pay for employment than a country that focuses narrowly on the needs of the rich, whether it is their consumer needs for the price of a second yacht or another trip around the world, or whether it is their capital preference which is to invest in the highest rate of interest, even if it means shipping the money out of the country so that it is no longer of benefit to the people who did the work that made that money possible. They defend the preferential option for the poor both because the poor need it immediately—there are people dying now in Canada who should not be dying and they are dying because they are poor and they should not be poor—and because, for the general health of our country including our economy, looking after the bottom end means that everybody in the long run benefits more than if we look after only the top end.

This Government's policy has been the opposite as its predecessor's policy was the opposite. Money is found to bail out a bank. We heard a sob story a few minutes ago from a Member opposite about the poor depositors of a bank. Those depositors, for the great part, were people who knew well that they were investing in a risky operation at high interest rates. They were doing it because they were greedy. They knew that the law, as it was, did not protect them over a certain level. When their greed led them into trouble, they asked this Government, which talks about private enterprise and not intervening in the economy, to bail them out and pay the debt

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which they incurred with their eyes wide open, and this Government agreed to do it.

It is the same in another way with the oil companies. When they want to be paid to explore for oil and then claim ownership of the oil that the public paid them to find, this Government wishes to give them even more of that free gift that the previous Government did, and it is doing that. The same thing applies generally to the large corporations in this country, whether they are in transportation or communications or extraction of raw materials or manufacturing. The Government argues that it will give the most to those who have the most in a rather perverse twist of an earlier teaching which said that of those who have much, much will be expected. I refer to the result of this policy, not just in this Government's time, but during its predecessor's time, and during a predecessor Government led by this same Party 20 years ago or 25 years ago. For the whole period since World War II and increasingly as people get farther away from the "dirty thirties" or the Great Depression, the whole principle has been what some people call "trickle down"—give it to the rich, they will spend it; it will come to the affluent, they will spend it; it will come to the lower middle class, they will spend it; and it will come to the poor. This is supposed to benefit everybody, but it does not because those who say "pour it in at the top and it will trickle down to everybody" are careful not to say where they got that stuff they poured in at the top. They do not take that money from the rich to pour it to the rich. They take that money from the working people, even from people on unemployment insurance. Those are the people who have to pay the great bulk and personally pay the great share of the taxes that are now used and are poured in at the top. The Government tells people: "Hold on, tighten your belt. If you live long enough, some of this that we took from you will come back to you, and we will ask you to thank us for giving back to you a few years later a little bit of what we are taking from you now". That is the very opposite of what the Roman Catholic Church and other churches have been teaching in this country which calls itself Christian.

I said that the principle of the preferential option for the poor has become more prominently taught in other countries. I am thinking particularly of Central and South America where the question of rich and poor is much sharper than it is in Canada, not because they are worse than we are but because a general trend in the world has progressed farther there than it has yet in Canada. We would do well to look at those countries to see whether that is the road we are heading down, whether that is the road we want to head down.

When I was in Chile last summer, our then Ambassador told me that the Government of Chile was right to lower the incomes of the people of Chile so that they could compete better in the international market, and he said that Canada must do the same thing. In other words, it is a deliberate policy of reducing the incomes of the people of Canada, so that Chile can sell its copper cheaper and Canada can sell its copper cheaper. Chile must now produce three tons of copper to get