

Social assistance services cannot now meet the demands of low-income Canadians and their families. We have witnessed the rise, as I said earlier, of the number of Canadian families forced to go to food banks. Forty per cent of all food bank users are children—not your child or children, Mr. Speaker, not the children of the members opposite, not the children of members on this side of the House. Very sadly, 40 per cent of the users of food banks are children.

Why is that happening? It is happening because the responsibility of the federal government to provide enough assistance to the provinces is not being undertaken. In fact, the assistance is inadequate. This government has done nothing to help low-income Canadians and has, in fact, abandoned its responsibility to ensure that social assistance programs are available to all of those in need.

I spoke about the fact that welfare rates are not adequate in my home province of British Columbia. I also mentioned why, in my view, this is the case. The British Columbia government is strangling the welfare system and, therefore, is a have or a wealthy province.

I would like to read for the record some statistics that support my claim. In its 1989 report, the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia outlines that the shortfalls welfare recipients face each month represent the difference between welfare payments received and the amount calculated to enable an individual or family to fully participate in their community.

The first statistic is for a single male. The shortfall is 83 per cent. The person receives \$430 but needs \$787. For a couple with no children the shortfall is 59 per cent. The couple receives \$732 in welfare payments. They need \$1,164. For the single mother with one child the shortfall is 44 per cent. She receives \$815, yet needs \$1,176. For the single mother with two teenagers the shortfall is 66 per cent. She receives \$986, but needs \$1,633. For the couple with an infant and toddler the shortfall is 69 per cent. That couple receives \$1,038, yet needs \$1,753.

These examples are hypothetical, but they are based on provincial averages. They do not take into account the housing crisis in the lower mainland and many other

communities in British Columbia that make life for social assistance recipients even more difficult.

The Canada Assistance Plan represents the principle that regardless of where one lives in Canada, whether it is on Vancouver Island, in the lower mainland of British Columbia, in Fort St. John, Yellowknife, Whitehorse, Edmonton or a farm in the rural part of the prairie provinces, Regina—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member will have 20 minutes remaining in her speech should we come back to this bill after three o'clock.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to point out the deplorable state of summer employment programs for our post-secondary students.

This government has cut funding to the SEED program, the summer employment program for students, to the tune of \$41 million or 35 per cent for the next year. Since 1985 we have seen the government's contributions to this program steadily decline from \$149 million to \$71 million. The number of jobs created has declined from over 87,000 to 71,000 over the last four years. These further cuts will mean that another 24,000 students will be without a summer job this year.

All this seems rather odd when we consider that since 1985, tuition fees have nearly doubled and living expenses have skyrocketed. With the cut-backs to transfer payments, we can expect this trend to continue. Yet, the SEED program provides students with only 10 weeks of work when they are available for 16 weeks, at an average hourly wage of \$5.73.