

*Government Orders*

for those people in that position but it is bad for all of us collectively.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, when people live in poverty, the crime rate tends to go up. When people are in need, this often has undesirable effects, unfortunately.

In concluding, I would ask the government to withdraw this bill while there is still time, and to stop being partisan and consider for a minute the well-being of Canadians.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James):** Mr. Speaker, I do not have to tell you that this is an historic day in our country. There began today a new round of constitutional negotiations and I think all of us in this House would agree and all of us would hope that this newest round of constitutional negotiations will end in a successful and equitable settlement, a settlement that all Canadians from sea to sea to sea can be comfortable and happy with so that we can move forward to greater and better days.

By any objective measurement, by any standard, by any measurement, Canada is a great country. I think one of the reasons why it is a great country is because we have a strong tradition of sharing. Just look at some of the things that we have done, say, since the Second World War, be it family allowances, unemployment insurance benefits, old age assistance, Canada Pension Plan, medicare; I could mention a number of programs. But they all speak to a fine quality in Canadians, a quality of sharing; sharing our resources, sharing our wealth. I think that is one of the main reasons why this country is so great. I think if we continue that tradition of caring and sharing, the future of this country will be guaranteed and it will remain one of the best countries in the world.

• (1550)

But I am worried, Mr. Speaker. I am worried because I see a Tory agenda, a Tory disease that I think is slowly but surely destroying that great tradition of sharing in this country. I think this particular bill, Bill C-32, which would place a 5 per cent cap on CAP or, to put it another way, a 5 per cent cap on social programs under the

Canada Assistance Plan, is symptomatic of what I call the Tory disease, symptomatic of the Tory agenda.

Let there be absolutely no doubt about it, this government which, by the way, is probably the most right wing government this country has ever known, is following a very deliberate agenda. It is an agenda, if I can put it in a few words, to downsize government, to handcuff government, to get government away from some of the traditional responsibilities that government has had in this country and turn those responsibilities over to the private sector.

The government has done it in many ways. In some cases it has just taken its responsibilities and given them to the marketplace. One of the best examples of that, of course, is the free trade agreement, a bilateral agreement with the United States, an international treaty that really democratizes this country. It makes us unable to deal with some very very serious national economic issues because those responsibilities have been taken away from government, taken away from the people and turned over to the private sector, over to the marketplace. The marketplace, as you know well, Mr. Speaker, is really not that democratic and I do not even expect it to be that democratic. Certainly you do not have the kind of justice that most Canadians would want out of the marketplace. If you are looking for justice, you look to your democratic institutions.

The free trade agreement is just one example of that. We have seen this government slowly destroying our tradition of sharing in other ways. Look at what it is doing by way of reducing transfer payments to the provinces. Transfer payments are an example of sharing; the federal government, facing its responsibilities, taking on those responsibilities seriously, and providing assistance to all provinces, sharing the wealth, sharing our resources.

We have seen in the last few years that the government is cutting back on those transfers, cutting back on moneys to the provinces. You can be absolutely sure that many of the provinces, if not all of them, will not be able to afford some of those cutbacks. What the provinces will do in turn is pass on some of their responsibilities to the municipalities. The municipalities have no place to turn whatsoever and those very valuable services that are