

*Government Orders*

Mr. Speaker, I know my time is running out, but I just want to go back and challenge those 46 members from Ontario. I challenge them. If you look at the press today, it reports on the court's victory, but this is the government's victory, and people misinterpret it. The government can do what it wants to do. The Supreme Court said it could cut its assistance under the Canada Assistance program unilaterally, but that is not what you call federal-provincial co-operation.

It cut it unilaterally to Ontario, B.C. and Alberta. Since the court victory, Ontario and B.C. have had to pay back because they took out of CAP. They were paid by the Canada Assistance program 50 cents to match their 50 cents. They had to pay back last month in Ontario. Ottawa made its last payment to Ontario for its 1991-92 fiscal year because it had already reached its cap. Social assistance demands in Ontario rose by more than 17 per cent.

When Ontario is not feeling good, Mr. Speaker, it affects my area. Because of the way our country is, if Ontario is not in a prosperous mode, then the Atlantic is not going to be. We have always benefited from Ontario being in a prosperous mode. As Ontario goes down, you can imagine what it is going to do to the general revenues that would go into the equalization program.

I can imagine what is going to happen in the budget. It does not take much, but at the same time, with some degree of imagination this government could have looked at CAP in the good years when it only did a four page report for three fiscal years. It could have looked at some way of putting flexibility within the Canada Assistance Plan. We have not had the devastation of those who are most in need today: the poor, the jobless, the single woman under 65 and those people right across Canada who are suffering from a lack of imagination.

Why can it not take the money it is going to put into the UI fund because it is being over-run? Why can it not put the money into the UI fund for job creation as my leader has said so well. Put it into infrastructure, sewers, the environment and water supplies. Let the infrastructure be there in all those communities across Canada because people want to work. Give people work and we will be able to go on when the good times come back because, from all reports, they are just around the

corner. But it is getting to that corner that is so devastating to the people across Canada.

• (1230)

**Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to challenge anything my hon. colleague from Nova Scotia has said about social assistance and other social programs, but I want her and others to know that the reality of life in Canada is that the greatest threat to social programs is a bankrupt national treasury. If our financial statements show horrendous debts and our annual financial statements show horrendous deficits, we will not be able to fund the social programs that Canadians have enjoyed in the past and it is as simple as that. There is no money. There is no money available for new social programs. All members who advocate greater expenditures at this time on the social programs and increased payments for social programs are simply heading the country toward bankruptcy. Then there will be no social programs whatsoever. I hope the beneficiaries of the social programs realize that they will receive no benefit from those who advocate expenditures of funds that the public cannot produce through taxes and other means.

I want to ask the hon. member a question. Let me explain it this way. The New Democratic Party members constantly demand greater expenditures and when you ask where we will get the money, they invariably say two things. First they say to reduce expenditures on national defence. We have a world-wide situation which may mean that we do not have to spend as much on national defence. This is the so-called peace dividend.

I want the member to stand up in the House and answer this question. Does she believe we should dramatically reduce expenditures on national defence? She knows the havoc that can wreak at Cornwallis.

Second, I would like to ask her if she thinks we should increase taxation to pay for social programs. Never mind the sermon about infrastructure. We all know about that. That has nothing to do with the matter before the House.

What she has contended is that we can continue to fund and increase the funding for social programs. I want to know where she thinks we should get the money. Does she believe we should get it from national defence expenditures or should we tax the rich as the NDP say?