

most able to afford it pay for any change in the funding structure.

This bill shows us that the government thinks the easiest place to get the money is from the powerless, from those who are unable to protect themselves. According to the government, British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta are provinces that are doing a little better economically than the rest of Canada. However, poor people in Ontario are the same as the poor in Saskatchewan. If you are poor in British Columbia, you feel it just as much as if you are poor in Alberta. This bill attacks the poor. It attacks the poorest of the poor because they are the people who depend upon the provincial government for the funding to make care available to them.

It also shows that the priority of this government is not to take care of the poor. Furthermore, this bill sentences the people who are already poor, who are already having problems, to at least two years of increasing poverty because the amount of money that the provincial government will have available to take care of them is going to be less each year.

We have had a child care system of a sort in Canada. This government promised that we would have a child care system that would take care of everybody. In fact, the government got as far as bringing legislation before the House. While it was not a particularly good bill, it showed that the government had some concern about this, at least before the election. That concern for child care disappeared some time during the election, and by the end of the election it was not there. This bill makes it possible, I suppose, for the government to say that now there is no money and we cannot expect it to have a further developed child care structure.

This bill does all of these things in a way which suggests that because Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario are a little better off, they can afford to dig deeper some place else and find money for this kind of care. That is not actually what happens. Since the problems of child care and poverty are not a priority for those governments either, consequently they are going to be affected by this change in the financing structure.

The Established Programs Financing originally did exactly that. It established financing for particular programs: health care, post-secondary education and so on

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across the board. Originally, that financing was on a dollar-for-dollar basis. For each amount the provincial government spent, it collected a matching grant.

The Liberal government of a few years ago decided that this was getting a little expensive and that it did not have the kind of control over it that it wanted, so it was changed to block funding for secondary education, health and other welfare structures of the provincial governments.

The impact was exactly what we in the New Democratic Party had predicted in those days, that if you take the responsibility for expenditures for the poor and give it to a Conservative or Liberal government, they will not make that a priority. If they are allowed to spend this money any they want, health care or education will not be a priority of a Conservative or a Liberal government, and it was not.

For instance, statistics today show that the province of British Columbia spends less than 1 per cent, in fact less on post-secondary education beyond what it should have or would have received from the federal government. Therefore, we cannot always trust the provincial governments to establish the kind of priorities which we think are important in the New Democratic Party, such as good health care, such as child care, such as care of those people who are unable to feed themselves and clothe themselves.

In 1986, this government further affected the Established Programs Financing by starting a reduction program which would reduce the amount of money that the provinces would have for health care, post-secondary education, and care of people who are poor.

• (1710)

Bill C-69 cuts still further into the kind of financing which we have been talking about here. Consequently, it undermines further the program's ability to improve the standard of living or the quality of life for the people across the country, which is what this established program was intended to do originally. It was already undermined to a certain extent by the Liberal government when it went from established program funding to block funding. The Conservative government further undermined it by reducing it in 1986, and here we have the final blow to this particular program which suggests