

Government Orders

We know that this government's policies will mean that the Prime Minister's promises at the United Nations children's summit are very hollow when the policies that attack children result in even more poverty and result in more line-ups at food banks.

We know that shelters for battered women are funded under the Canada Assistance Plan, and funds for these shelters are being cut back. We know that the already desperate circumstances of people living with AIDS, people with HIV, are being made worse as a result of the cutbacks in the Canada Assistance Plan. Some members of this House will remember the government promising with great fanfare a national child care program. Where is it? It is nowhere to be found. Another casualty of this government's appalling economic policies.

What are the alternatives? The government is clearly saying that it does not have enough money. The fact of the matter is that if this government would bring in a fair tax system, it would have the revenues necessary to ensure that the scourge of children living in poverty is put to an end. The poverty of women, particularly single parents, could be put to an end.

The member for Mississauga asks what kind of taxes we are talking about. I will tell the member for Mississauga. In 1986 there were 89,000 corporations which paid not one penny in income tax despite the fact that they recorded collective profits of \$22 billion.

I will tell the hon. member that the Canadian banks have had one of the most successful records in history in this country. Are they paying their fair share in taxes? No way.

Instead of attacking children and instead of attacking the poorest and the most vulnerable in Canada, why does this government not get tough with the banks, with the wealthy, with the corporate elite who for too long have not paid their fair share? In fact from 1986 to 1989 corporate taxes went down 20 per cent under Conservative government policies and their profits in that same period of time went up by 34 per cent. Where is the fairness in that?

This is the same government that brings in policies cutting back on the Canada Assistance Plan which is a plan that was brought into existence to ensure that the poor, the most vulnerable, those living on social assistance were entitled to live with some decency, some

dignity and some sense of economic security. This government's policies are attacking that.

We know as well that this government's policies have resulted in an erosion of the quality of health care and post-secondary education in British Columbia. The cutbacks under the EPF, the Established Programs Financing Act, under Bill C-69 and other programs have meant that the share of the federal government in post-secondary education and health care has declined dramatically. In fact the cash component under this Conservative government is going to disappear entirely within the next decade.

I see it in my own constituency. I see the effect of these cuts at the B.C. Institute of Technology, at Simon Fraser University, on students attending Douglas College and others. There are programs which are victims of this government's attacks under the EPF and the Canada Assistance Plan.

Surely it is time that Parliament said to this government that enough is enough. The gap between the rich and the poor in this country is increasing. The number of people on social assistance in British Columbia and elsewhere is going up instead of down and this government is cutting back on its fundamental obligations under the Canada Assistance Plan to ensure that those programs are properly funded.

In conclusion, I want to say again that we as New Democrats reject this bill and the approach of this government which is victimizing those who are poorest and most vulnerable. We know it is happening at the international level as well. I see it happening in the city of Vancouver and in the province of British Columbia. It is time for a new government which puts people first instead of banks and the corporate elite.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I know the Speaker wants to pursue something which arose this morning and he will be in the House momentarily. I will recognize the hon. member for Mississauga South but I will tell him that he may be interrupted momentarily.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Madam Speaker, I do not intend to speak long or completely, but I want to point out that the obligation of government is to use the resources that we collect from the people of Canada to pay the bills of Canada.

This bill rations that money.