

Government Orders

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the minister did not deliberately mislead the House. The premier of Ontario was not suggesting a social charter where the Supreme Court was the final arbitrator. There are other mechanisms to enforce the social charter.

I have a supplementary question for the minister. In light of the fact that we have had some cutbacks recently in federal government funding—and I am talking about the rate of increase in funding for post-secondary education, medical care, welfare, and indeed some cutbacks at the provincial level in some provinces during a recession when people need it most—I would like to ask the minister: without a social charter in the Constitution, what guarantees will the people of this country have that these important social programs will remain universal, affordable and accessible to all Canadians regardless of where we may live?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, one of the most effective guarantees, probably the most effective guarantee in the real world, is to have a growing Canadian economy able to compete in the world. That is one of the reasons we have proposed an economic union proposal in our document.

I was rather surprised this morning to hear his leader raise some questions about the idea of the economic union, because I do not think one can be taken seriously about social issues unless one is prepared to take the economic decisions and put in place the economic mechanisms which let us have the wealth that fund the social programs this country has been so proud of.

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[*Translation*]

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the presence in our gallery of a parliamentary delegation from Burkina-Faso, in Canada to study the electoral process and the workings of a pluralistic democracy.

[*English*]

I also wish to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of Dr. Zdenek Kessler, member

of the Presidium of the Czech and Slovak Parliament and Chairman of Constitutional and Legislative Committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN**MEASURE TO AMEND**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Mazankowski that Bill C-32, an act to amend the Canada Assistance Plan, be read the second time and referred to Legislative Committee F; and the amendment of Mr. Vincent (p. 2536).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt has two minutes left. I ask for the collaboration of all hon. members—

[*Translation*]

— so that we can hear the end of the hon. member's speech.

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, when my speech was interrupted prior to Question Period, I was just talking about the difficulty that the CAP under Bill C-32 was going to cause for children.

I point out once again that while Canada is one of the wealthiest nations in the world there are close to one million children living in poverty. We are second only to the United States in the level of child poverty in the industrialized world. It appears that these children are being asked to pay for the loopholes that are offered big corporations.

I say that because it appears that over the last few years profitable corporations in Canada have increasingly being paying less and less of their share, and yet this government would have us believe that in fact it is our social programs that are causing us to have this massive deficit and debt that we have.

I point out that the Statistics Canada figures in April show that taxes had increased the most from 1988 to 1989 for those on the second lowest rung of the income ladder, an increase of 1.1 per cent, while at the same