

Government Orders

Conservatives to come with me to the child development centre and tell the parents and the children that they are taking away some of the money from that centre and they will not be able to continue to operate as they had before. That is the kind of thinking that this government has not done. It has not thought about what the implications are of this particular legislation. It is going to force these community groups and local governments to continually struggle for more funds and assistance to deliver these much-needed programs.

Why is it? It has been argued by many and I think there is certainly a consensus growing in the country that this government does not have a vision for Canada. I am afraid to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in fact it does have a vision for Canada. It is one that certainly is not shared by the vast majority of Canadians right now.

It is an agenda that has been rejected on the whole in the United States, certainly in the U.K. and other parts of central and eastern Europe where people are struggling to come to grips with the battle between the conservative point of view represented by the government and in some cases former communist governments. There is a struggle for social democracy that will deliver services and government to people so that they can actually have government programs and government services that people recognize and respect.

I do not think that is a vision that this government shares. It is a hard line, market-driven vision of Canada that rejects people who need help. This legislation, Bill C-32, really does just that.

The government has not paid attention to the impact it is going to have in all of our communities. I say every member of Parliament should check with their local societies and governments and ask them what they think of this legislation. The view will likely be unanimous. It is a bad bill and it should be thrown out and defeated in the House today.

Thank you very much for this time, Mr. Speaker, to really bring forward what I think are the serious faults with this legislation. I have mentioned a number of important directions that I think social policy should take in this country, directions that this government has rejected. Hopefully in the next election the Canadian public will reject this government as well.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this bill because the

intent behind it really makes me institutionally angry as well as personally angry. I very much object to the thrust of this bill.

Bill C-32 on which I am speaking really goes back to Bill C-69, which was approved by this House and which indeed limited the contribution to social assistance and social programs, among other things, for the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta, the richer provinces if you like. I am speaking in the context of the over-all reduction by the government of transfers to the provinces, looking at all the 14 different kinds of transfers, EPF payments, equalization payments, and those kinds of payments which are part of our Canadian heritage of being a country in its totality, which I think is not a bad way to look at the country these days. Also, it really allows the country to be more equal from one end to the other.

I am very concerned about this bill, as I was about Bill C-69, because what this is essentially doing is hitting the lower and middle-income classes that can least afford it.

The transfer payments that I am most concerned about have been spoken about on many occasions by my colleagues from Newfoundland and Atlantic Canada. The tremendous hardship it has caused our constituents has been just another blow in the negative cascading effect of one blow after the other.

I consider myself a responsible parliamentarian, like my colleagues. I am very conscious of the fact that the national debt in 1984 was \$168 billion. Seventeen per cent of that was owned by offshore concerns. In other words, we owe that money to people outside of Canada.

• (1150)

Today, some seven years after the government came to power, it is \$400 billion. I do not want to get into a long discussion about blaming one or the other. I am just quoting the facts. It is now \$400 billion. Almost 40 per cent of that is owed to outside Canadian concerns, the United States, Japan and Saudi Arabia. We have lost control of our economy.

On top of that, at a time when the government knew there was a recession coming, and many eloquent and learned speeches have been made in the House on the subject, the government introduces a goods and services tax when the advice from everyone from this side of the House and I think probably a few from that side of the House as well was: "For goodness sake, if you have to do