

*Government Orders*

However, when they ultimately have to turn to the welfare rolls it substantially adds to the cost and the problems of the provincial governments. They have the choice of adding to the pot and thereby increasing their deficits. We are seeing that happen in many provinces as the welfare rolls go up because of the inability of people either to get unemployment insurance or stay on unemployment insurance for the longer period of time that is required between having a seasonal job or cutting back the benefits. It is not a nice position to be in.

I suggest that what the government is doing, through its policies under Bill C-32, is attacking the very fibre that we have come to know and love in Canada.

I wonder, if I go back to the start of the free trade agreement, how this ties in. I look with some scepticism when the government says: "We are streamlining. We have to cut back". I look at what happened during the election in 1988. At that stage, the government essentially turned its back on the fact that it was running deficits each year. It turned its back on the fact that it had a major national debt to deal with and said: "Our problem is that we have to be competitive on the open market, and the free trade agreement will open up these broad horizons and these markets".

After that the government brought in the legislation in conformity, I would suggest, with some of the things set out in the free trade agreement. It predicted, in some of the arguments made, the cutbacks in unemployment insurance, the lengthening of the time it took to qualify, and the shortening of the period of time it took to get unemployment insurance. Although it promised more money for training because of the jobs that it agreed would be lost as a result of this agreement, that money was never forthcoming. In spite of the promises it made as it made the changes, it turned its back on the retraining of some of the very people it is now affecting by Bill C-32.

The clawback on Old Age Security and Canada pension was an attack on universality. It was the first step in the erosion of these programs, the deindexation of these pensions, the requirement of those above a certain level to pay back what has been paid out to them under the guise that "no, we are not attacking universality. These programs are still universal. Everybody gets them, but we are going to take that money back at the end of the period of time. It is different. It is like a tax". Nonsense. It was the first step in the total erosion of Old Age

Security. It was the first step in cutting out family allowances to all people, not just those who were better off. That will be accomplished by the deindexation of those particular programs.

When we looked at the goods and services tax, the arguments made were endless. Some 85 per cent of the people in the country were against the goods and services tax. Yet, would this government listen? No. Once again it turned its back on the people. It closed its ears to what the people were saying and said: "We know what is best for the people of this country. Regardless of what they want, we are going to institute this tax because it will make us more competitive".

Tell one million impoverished children that the goods and services tax and the policies of this government have helped them. Tell those millions of people on the unemployment rolls that the policies of this government have helped them. Tell those millions of people on social assistance that the policies of this government have helped them. Tell them that the free trade agreement has given them those manufacturing jobs they used to have. Tell them that those jobs which are fleeing south are going to come back when we get out of this recession which I suggest is much deeper than this government has or will admit.

The government was told, prior to the institution of the goods and services tax, that a major downturn in the economy was coming and would hit in the fall of 1990 and early 1991. It was not until well into 1991 that the minister finally admitted that we were in recessionary times. The Conference Board of Canada and the treasurer of the Alberta government warned the government that the ramifications of the goods and services tax would be far-reaching and the implications massive for the people of this country.

Unfortunately those words are ringing true now. We have and are in a major recession. We have millions of people out of work. In my area in the Okanagan alone we have never been below the 10 per cent mark. We are always well above the national average on unemployment.

My riding which lies on the border with the United States is affected in a major way, and particularly since the advent of the goods and services tax, with cross-border shopping. People have been chased out of their own country to look where they feel they can get goods and services more cheaply. And the exodus is massive.