

Government Orders

Mr. de Jong: I apologize to the hon. member and commend him for his brilliant introduction and for his contribution to the House.

The fact is that in 1971 the Westons and the Bronfmans said they were given a tax deferral that was worth some \$18 billion then. The deferral runs out in 1993. Twenty-one years are over.

Finally, the folks who have benefited the most from deficit financing, from the increase in wealth that occurred in the 1970s and the 1980s, whose properties in downtown Toronto rather than being worth \$10 million for a high rise building are now maybe worth \$30 million, \$50 million or \$60 million, the Tories are now going to allow them to defer paying any tax until the last member of the trust dies.

Are they making any contributions to fighting the deficit? Where are the contributions of the Westons and the Bronfmans?

There is dead silence. I do not expect the Liberals to change that because, after all, they created the situation in 1971, nor the Tories who are just going to perpetuate it.

A horse in Mr. Weston's stables gets more tax deductions and tax breaks than an old senior citizen, a widow or a child living in poverty. That is the obscenity occurring today as we finish this session before Christmas.

Do not blame the people on welfare for creating the deficit. My heart throbs when we hear the Liberals complain and take up the plight of the poor. They also have some responsibility in all this.

It also does not make very good economic sense at times when there is an economic downturn to put the screws on the very poor. This does not make economic sense. It is almost Keynesian in reverse and we see that with this government.

In good economic times it introduces tax reductions and in bad economic times it introduces the GST and more taxes. In good economic times it increases government expenditures and in bad economic times it cuts down on economic expenditures.

That is more than voodoo economics. That is stupid economics. With the bill that we are debating today—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. The time of the hon. member has now expired.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We have before us a bill today that is linked more closely than any we have had in the time I have been in this House with extending the poverty of children in Canada.

There is absolutely no doubt that when the government reneges on its commitment to cost share in social programs and social services, the Canadians who are being hurt are our children.

A report was done very recently in Ontario called the transitions report. This was approximately three or four years ago under a Liberal government. It has seen little action under the NDP government in Ontario.

Its primary recommendations were geared to having a social services system that allows people to get out of poverty rather than keeping them imprisoned in it. The main focus of that report was on our children. We should provide the family income so that children could be cared for, housed, clothed and fed decently. That means they would also be able to be educated. It means they would also have some commitment to a future that would encourage them to stay in school. It would mean they would be healthier and cost less to the health care system in this country.

This bill before us today says the federal government is no longer prepared to pay its share to meet the needs of children. It will set an arbitrary limit and no matter how many needy children there are, or how desperate those needs are, it will not go above that.

That is not the kind of Canada that I have raised my children in. It is not the kind of Canada I want for their children. It is a Canada where the poorest in our society bear the burdens of all the economic mistakes of government and of those with money.

The government creates the economic climate and it has no right to insist that the poorest and the weakest carry the burden of its errors in doing so.

If there is any doubt about who carries the burden, let us examine what services funding will be affected: dental care for people on social assistance, essential living services for disabled persons, foster homes for abused children, safe housing for abused women and their