

There are people who vocationally want to be rehabilitated. The waiting list in my community is over one year. These people desperately want to be retrained and rehabilitated to get back into the work force. Bill C-32 perhaps renders this possibility impossible.

Community development services are to encourage and assist members of deprived communities to improve their social and economic conditions. The major employer of the community of Sault Ste. Marie is certainly under siege. We are not sure of tomorrow, next week or next month. Our social assistance rolls grow and grow and grow each and every day.

What has happened? The federal government says no to the province. A year ago the Ontario government increased transfer payments to the municipalities and the federal government was screaming: "You can't spend that kind of money". We quickly found out without the assistance of the federal government that we cannot spend that kind of money.

Where does it come to? It comes down to the municipality that is forced to hire more staff to handle the caseloads, and at the same time the tax base is being eroded. Our major employer cannot pay. With the assistance of the provincial government \$4 million of tax arrears was paid by the provincial government on behalf of the employer. How can the municipality take up the slack if it does not get assistance from the provincial government that in turn has not received assistance from the federal government?

• (1040)

Of course the indication is that it is only the have provinces that have a cap. It is fortuitous or very timely that in *The Toronto Star* today it is stated "Cap on welfare costing Ontario \$900 million". That is the financial effect this year on the Ontario government—\$900 million.

The Minister of State for Finance says: "Ontario, Alberta and B.C. are the best places to bear the extra burden". What a cynical comment to make when Ontario was a have province and we hope that it shall be once again. Presently our manufacturing base has been eroded dramatically. We read day after day the litany of plant closures and plant layoffs. How can the federal

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government suggest, even intimate, that Ontario can best bear the burden? We can no longer bear the burden; \$900 million is definitely an impact.

If we just want to talk about caseload, in metro Toronto the caseload for social assistance has reached 102,000 in one month, up from \$98,000 in December. Any suggestion that the recession is over is not true. The proof is in what is happening in communities across the country.

There is almost unanimous consent that the timing of Bill C-32 is totally inappropriate. When you are in the midst of a recession you do not hurt the people who can least afford to be hurt. It should be noted that 50 per cent of Canada's poor live in B.C., Alberta and Ontario.

The recession has forced people out of work and on to UI. Believe me, my experiences with the UI program of this country have not been pleasant. The government has abdicated its responsibility in UI. It has made it more difficult for workers to qualify for UI. It has shortened the time period for which they will qualify. Believe me, if there is any doubt in the regulations, the workers will never ever get the benefit of the doubt.

I have been to the board of referees on behalf of hundreds of steel workers in my community. It was an unfortunate experience. The regulations point out that it is very difficult to win appeals. We shall go on despite this, but when these people run out of UI they are forced to go to the social assistance program. They do not want to, but will the help be there? It is becoming more and more difficult to provide that help.

In Canada, one of the wealthiest nations in the world, and I think we all still accept that, there are close to one million children living in poverty. We are second only to the U.S. in the level of child poverty in the industrialized world. These children are being asked to pay for loopholes that are offered to big corporations.

I want to cite a particular example. I think examples have to be used to hit home the severity of the problems in our communities in this country. Sault Ste. Marie is only a microcosm of what is happening in so many other communities. We are not in it alone certainly, but I think we are a case study of what is going on in this country.