

*Government Orders*

The relationship to the bill that we are debating is tied to that kind of response. People do not want us to fiddle with the programs and services that are valuable to them and the fair and equitable treatment of those people who, for all sorts of reasons, do not have the economic strength for full participation. Those people need protection from governments. When the federal government reduces transfer payments to any group, whether it is a province or what have you, that group has to find some replacement funds.

• (1620)

We are seeing it in increased taxes, we are seeing it in reductions in transfers to municipalities which means the only things the government can do is either cut services or raise property taxes or user fees. It has no choice if it wants to protect its citizens.

The other theme that came through at the constituent assembly that again relates to this bill is the desire for a strong, central, national government with the power to ensure that there is equitable availability of services from sea to sea to sea, so that no matter where you are you have access to the same quality of health care, the same quality of education. That is not to suggest that there might not be different approaches in each of the jurisdictions, but that the same quality will be there.

They were very strong on that, but they were also strong on not wanting the courts to be the adjudicators. They wanted Parliament to make the decisions, whether it was Parliament in terms of this House or the other Chamber which they wanted retained but reformed to provide more protection for them so that this House, through the government of the day, could not arbitrarily reduce the quality of those services.

In a broad way they were saying: "We want you to do it but we are not prepared to trust you entirely", the "you" being we in this Chamber, the "you" being the government of the day.

I think it was a cry for a different way and by proceeding with this particular bill, Bill C-32, I believe it is going against the mood of the people of this country. They do not want our programs weakened. They want them strengthened. They want the power of this institution strengthened so that it acts on their behalf, the citizens of this great country, not on behalf of a bottom

line or a particular corporate mentality; on behalf of all citizens.

At the same time they, like I, recognize that each part of the country is different. We have different needs. We have different desires. We have different realities—geography, history, language, culture, our economic base. Some of those jurisdictions need greater assistance from the federal level in order to help make them more equitable from sea to sea to sea.

This particular bill, which is extending a previous bill which capped CAP until 1992 and extends it to 1995, is going in the wrong direction. As the previous speaker said, it should be allowed to die on the Order Paper. We cannot necessarily reverse what has happened to date, but we can prevent this kind of change from occurring in the future.

It is fair game if the Government of Canada sits down with the provincial and territorial governments and carves out a new deal. That is fair game because it needs change. Just because we adopted a program in 1960 or 1950 does not mean we should not revisit it to see if it still works in 1992.

As my leader said in one of the constitutional debates, we should not be talking about who has what power in this country but where is that power best placed to serve the people of this country. It may be that the best place is at the municipal level. It may be that the best place is at the provincial level. It may be that the best place is at the federal level, or maybe a mix. That is the kind of approach we should be taking, not an arbitrary decision to cut off three provinces because of a no longer valid assumption about being haves.

Look at the statements from the premier of Ontario in the televised address that he made two weeks ago or the plea to the Government of Canada for almost \$1 billion to assist Ontario in dealing with the realities of today. It does not matter who we blame for those realities, they are real.

We have lost thousands of jobs in Ontario and we are losing more every day. Yes, it is because of the free trade agreement and yes, it is because of the recession. Perhaps the federal government was directly responsible or maybe it was the provincial government, but the bottom line is that there are tough times in Ontario today.