

transferred to Canadians was \$25.1 billion. By the end of that decade the cost had increased to \$30 billion, an increase of \$5 billion in only five years. Transfers to other levels of governments in support of social programs have also increased from \$17.7 billion in 1984 to \$24.3 billion by the end of the decade.

With less and less money available for social programs spending because of the spiralling debt costs while program spending is increasing at an alarming rate, it is only a matter of time before we can no longer sustain social programs which make Canada such a unique and wonderful place to live. If we cannot sustain our social programs it will be the poor and disadvantaged of our nation who will suffer most.

My riding of Athabasca has a significant aboriginal population. While some reserves are financially capable of sustaining social spending because of revenues from oil and gas reserves, the majority of the reserves of my riding mirror that of the national aboriginal statistics.

Let me give some staggering statistics on natives in Canada and why the sustainability of these social programs is so important to our native communities. The native population today is experiencing a baby boom similar to what Canada experienced in the 1950s. Because of this baby boom natives rely more on Canada's social programs to build houses and schools, to provide health care services and to raise their standard of living above helpless poverty. If the government does not take control and reduce the debt, how can we continue to provide these basic services to the native communities that depend so heavily on these programs as well as other Canadians?

Also, 60 per cent of our natives live in remote rural areas of Canada. It is obvious that because of their location the delivery of social programs becomes very difficult and expensive to provide. Forty per cent of the total status Indian population receives social assistance. Approximately half the adult male population is unemployed, although on some reserves these rates can increase to as much as three-quarters or four-fifths of the able bodied population.

Additional problems face Canada's native communities including the tragedy of alcoholism, gasoline sniffing, suicide and many other problems. Davis Inlet is but one example of what these horrible afflictions can do to a community. How will government be able to help these communities by funding addiction clinics, counsellors and doctors if the debt continues to increase and eat up available funds? If the debt continues to increase we will not be able to sustain the programs we have today, let alone fund new ones.

Federal spending on Indian and Inuit programs has doubled since 1982-1983 and is the fastest growing area of federal

### *Government Orders*

spending. Under legislation federal program spending is capped at 3 per cent annually by the Spending Control Act, but for some reason native programs are exempted and far exceed this rate. Total federal spending on Indian and Inuit programs now exceeds \$7 billion in non-taxable dollars or \$60,000 per family of four. With this level of funding why do we have problems like those in Davis Inlet?

When I review the Auditor General's reports of the last 20 years I notice that every time he examined part of Indian affairs programs concerns were raised about accountability for money spent. He continually questioned whether funds were used for the purposes intended or managed with due regard for economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Not only must we reduce the debt to be able to sustain Canada's social programs, we must seek ways to lower the cost of providing social programs to natives. Abusers of the system must always be exposed and dealt with in an expeditious manner.

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I believe the administration and management of some of these social programs can be much more efficiently and effectively delivered to the native community by natives themselves which in fact appears to be the direction the government is going.

By providing a system of block funding and allowing natives to decide for themselves what their priorities will be, we could cut a lot of red tape and inefficiency out of the system which natives themselves claim is contained in the department. The only qualification I must add to this proposal is that native bands must meet rigid standards of accountability for tax dollars received which is exactly what the Auditor General has been demanding for the past 20 years.

We must end the waste and squandering of dollars that is going on today. The natives must set their own priorities. Are water and sewers a higher priority than Ovide Mercredi travelling to Mexico to assess the aboriginal uprising or other natives travelling to England to protest in front of Buckingham Palace, as well as native leaders taking trips to Geneva, South America, South Africa? The list goes on and on.

Safeguards must be put in place to monitor more closely the funding of projects in aboriginal communities, to end the provision of substandard housing and other infrastructure projects which could possibly pose health hazards and safety risks to the people occupying them in these communities and provide better accountability for the tax dollars spent.

Another recommendation I would like to make is to provide incentives for native students to be educated in fields which are needed back on the reserves, examples being medicine, business management, nursing and so on. By encouraging this type of