

Government Orders

I mentioned said, he is too old to hire and too young to retire.

This is because of the government's policy on free trade and because of the government's policy on cutting back unemployment insurance.

The number of people on welfare is 29 per cent higher than it was a year ago in Toronto. It does not mean that whereas there might have been 100 people on welfare then and 129 people now there are 29 more lazy people. They are not lazy. I see them working when they get a chance to study. I see them trying to develop some little sales enterprise selling children's clothes. It is tough to sell anything these days. I see them doing whatever they think of that could produce something to benefit them and their families, but the opportunities have been taken away by this government.

In March there were 105,491 cases administered by metro's welfare offices and that was 167,444 men, women and children. That is an increase at the end of last year from 98,000 cases, 154,000 people. These are people with flesh and blood and spirit and expectations and disappointments. These are the people who are paying for this government's policy of a free trade agreement and cutbacks and the other things that go with it in the Tory agenda. It is not only those people directly affected, but all metro taxpayers. This year it is expected that the tax bill for metro Toronto as a whole will be \$1.2 billion. Out of that metro will have to pay nearly \$187 million for metro's share of the welfare costs. That comes from other homeowners and other business people within metro even though most of them are still gainfully employed.

It may be that some people elsewhere think that the poor in Toronto are living off the fat of the land. I can tell you that the maximum monthly rate for those on welfare is \$646 for a single person; \$1,144 for two adults; \$1,239 for one adult and one child and \$1,448 for one adult and two children.

They can very well spend nearly all of that trying to rent—they have given up trying to buy—because the prices have been inflated by the people who also get the benefit of the exemption from capital gains tax on their

real estate speculations. They take the money from the poor in two ways. They take it by inflating the land price and they take it by having their capital gains from speculation exempted so that the poor must pay the taxes those rich people do not pay.

I want to point out also that it does not stop with the pain or misery that was felt last year and this year or this year and next year. For some people the damage becomes more long lasting, perhaps permanent.

We can see what has happened to the cities in the United States, particularly their inner cities, since Reagan invented the wonderful idea of cutting the taxes of the rich. He cut the taxes of the rich and, of course, loaded them on to the middle and low income people. He also cut back services because he said that would make the country prosper. Well, except for a little glitch occasioned by the gulf war, the United States economy is in serious trouble.

After a decade of Reagan and Bush, the United States is in deeper trouble than it was 10 years ago. American cities can show us what happens when that policy is followed. We can see the beginnings of it in Canada. We are not so far along but I think we should take warning. *The Toronto Star* points out: "There is a downward spiral of the poor that drags the whole of society with it". It is also happening on a world scale, but it is certainly happening in many cities of the United States and it has begun in the larger cities of Canada.

The infrastructure is rotting. In American cities there is uncollected garbage. We have not seen much of that in Toronto and I hope we never do. In America the voters are alienated and 50 per cent of the people do not even vote in the federal elections. That is a democracy? It is their legal right, but why do they not vote?

Crime is increasing. Epidemics and disease, violence and drug use are increasing among desperate people. In the shadow of the White House the infant mortality rate is more than 23 per cent, more than seven times the rate of that in Canada but we will be heading there if we follow Reagan and Bush's policies on taxation and the cutting of services.