

Government Orders

B.C. last year lost \$160 million. Over a five-year period it will lose \$1.2 billion. Ontario this year is losing \$1.2 billion and over a five-year period will lose in excess of \$6 billion.

In this period that the government says it will be spending this marvellous total of \$137 million it has taken away \$7 billion from two provinces alone. What is that \$7 billion used for? It is used for shelters for women who are battered and abused; it is used for child protection services, to investigate family violence and child protection; it is used for counselling services, to assist women who have been abused or attacked; it is the very foundation of protecting women through social programs that assist them to deal constructively with family violence.

The government is talking a nice line with its glitzy \$137 million PR program, while at the same time it is withdrawing \$7 billion actually used to fight the program. This is the fundamental philosophy of this government, to unload the problems on to the provinces.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the comment of our colleague. He will know that, as he mentioned himself, his own province of British Columbia has really been short-changed by the transfer payments, more particularly by the cap on Canada Assistance Plan. No matter how much welfare and other costs increase in that province, and in my own province of Ontario, the province is forced to shoulder the burden of any additional costs above 3 per cent over the amount of the previous year.

In the constituency that I represent in eastern Ontario there are extremely high unemployment rates. In my riding, in Hawkesbury, Alexandria, or other communities, unemployment rates are probably nearing 15 per cent. This is within about 50 miles of Parliament Hill. People sometimes think, those watching the House or the several thousand Canadians who read *Hansard* every day, that those living near Ottawa are well off. There is this wrong image of Ottawa as a so-called "fat cat city".

People living in Ottawa are not necessarily rich to start with but the minute you go some distance out of this city it does not get any better, particularly in my area where the economy is worse. It is a very beautiful area but nevertheless we are suffering terribly at the moment from unemployment and the social costs have increased.

I want to ask my colleague if he thinks it is fair that the federal government, by abdicating its responsibility the way that it did, has caused an increase in not only the burden of the province, but in my own province of Ontario, an increase in the burden of the municipalities, who ultimately pay 20 per cent of the welfare costs. Under our welfare rules in Ontario 20 per cent of the costs, as I said previously, are paid by municipalities. The long and the short of it is that we are paying for welfare by the acre in the province of Ontario and it is increasing dramatically as a result of this government's cap on the Canada Assistance Plan.

I want to ask my colleague if he agrees with me that this action on the part of the Conservatives is extremely unfair to residents of Ontario and British Columbia.

Mr. Karpoff: I appreciate the question of my hon. friend. I would even like to move a little closer from his riding, right into Ottawa—Carleton.

An hon. member: Ottawa—Carleton is part of the problem.

Mr. Karpoff: There was a 41 per cent increase in the number of people applying for income assistance in the Ottawa—Carleton district. The costs have gone up from something like \$290 million to \$350 million. To my understanding—and I may be out of date, so the figure may in fact be higher—there may be a cost of \$12 million that will be passed on to local taxpayers simply because this federal government has reneged on its responsibility to fulfil its statutory obligation under the Canada Assistance Plan.

One of the things that the Tories keep talking about is the deficit. I wonder if they can understand that the deficit is not only the fiscal deficit but also the amount of money we spend in this country on unemployment insurance and on welfare. The two of them are really the deficit. That amounts to not \$30 billion this year but the something like \$35 billion now being spent on UIC and welfare in this country. The total deficit is really in excess of \$70 billion.