

balanced meals. A malnourished child cannot develop properly. Children need good nutrition to grow strong and healthy.

A disadvantaged child will often go to school with an empty stomach. Trying to concentrate with hunger gnawing at your insides is a difficult thing. These children fall behind. Is it any surprise, then, that twice as many high school dropouts are youths living in poverty?

Even education, the thing that could help break the cycle of poverty for a poor child, is denied. As the child bred of poverty becomes an under-educated adult, what are his or her chances of finding a good job and of marrying and raising children to a better world? The chances are very slim, very slim indeed.

Instead he or she perpetuates the cycle of poverty with low paying jobs, social assistance or more frequent and longer bouts of unemployment, with more health problems and a shorter life expectancy.

These children of which I speak are not of a war-torn or struggling Third World country. These are Canadian children, 15 of every 100, who are strangers to daily balanced meals, cheated out of a proper education, and fated at birth for a hopeless life of poverty. They do not even have their health to rely on.

Why must this government perpetuate a cycle of poverty and neglect, which will forever shackle poor families, their children and children's children?

Where is the evidence for my indictment of this government? Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to read from an article that appeared in the March issue of this year's *Policy Options Politiques*. It entitled "Social Policy by Stealth", authored by Grattan Gray, a retired journalist and a long-time observer of the Ottawa scene who has written for *Maclean's* and *Quest*.

To indicate the basis for my indictment of this government, I quote:

I have been studying the development of social policy in this country for a number of years, from public documents, House of Commons debates and academic papers, but I have never seen the sort of development that has taken place in recent years, and which seems to have slipped by many of the professionals and academics. In brief, the Tory style of restraint has become what can only be characterised as "social policy by stealth".

I underscore "social policy by stealth". Why is that? I continue:

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It relies heavily on technical amendments to taxes and transfers that are as difficult to explain as they are to understand and thus largely escape media scrutiny and public attention. It camouflages regressive changes in the rhetoric of equity in an attempt to convince Canadians that tax increase are tax cuts and that benefit cuts are benefit increases—confuses the electorate and so insulates itself from criticism.

This is telling evidence of the performance of this government. Let me quote another paragraph:

It also abolished universal old age pensions and family allowances in one fell swoop by means of a devious mechanism known as the "clawback" which is the crowning achievement to date of social policy by stealth.

I could continue to quote much more from this article but time will not permit me to do so. Let me just say in terms of federal and provincial income taxes that families earning \$20,000 have an increase from 1984 to 1991 of 386 per cent, compared to a 4 per cent increase in taxes for those who earn \$100,000.

Let us look at federal child benefits. For those earning \$20,000 to \$50,000 there is a drop of as much as 2 per cent to 25 per cent in child benefits. People earning \$20,000, near the poverty line, still had to suffer cuts in child benefits.

I ask this House this simple question: Which cost would be lower, the cost of helping poor children now or paying to let the cycle of poverty spin? Just imagine the cost of health care alone and add to that the cost of criminal justice and lost productivity. It is indeed appalling because we realize that we are truly dealing with a government that has no heart. How can we measure the social cost of broken dreams, want, and lives lived under a cloud of hopelessness? The beginnings of an answer could be as simple as a national school lunch program, ensuring every child has one meal a day.

However, I submit that the most important government policy would be one of full employment, which policy my leader challenged this government to declare but which this government refuses to declare. Instead, this government insists that unemployment is an instrument of economic policy. For parents to be working and bringing home pay which is above a poverty line existence is the best guarantee for the healthy future of sons and daughters.

Our present social welfare system discourages the will to work. Take for example the case of a single mother. Her chances of finding proper child care are almost hopeless. If she takes a job and loses her social assistance, gone too is state funded help toward the costs of