

meant to be given to all children of low-income families, is in fact only given to children of working poor parents since the provinces are allowed by the Federal Government to deduct the full amount of NCB from the amount of social assistance received by parents on welfare.

23. The Committee notes with grave concern that with the repeal of CAP and cuts in social assistance rates, social services and programmes have had a particularly harsh impact on women, in particular single mothers, who are the majority of the poor, the majority of adults receiving social assistance and the majority among the users of social programmes.

24. The Committee is gravely concerned that such a wealthy country as Canada has allowed the problem of homelessness and inadequate housing to grow to such proportions that the mayors of Canada's 10 largest cities have now declared homelessness a national disaster.

25. The Committee is concerned that provincial social assistance rates and other income assistance measures have clearly not been adequate to cover rental costs of the poor. In the past five years, the number of tenants paying more than 50 per cent of their income towards rent has increased

by 43 per cent.

26. The Committee is concerned that in both Ontario and Quebec, governments have adopted legislation to redirect social assistance payments directly to landlords without the consent of recipients, despite the fact that the Quebec Human Rights Commission and an Ontario Human Rights Tribunal have found this treatment of social assistance recipients to be discriminatory.

27. The Committee expresses its grave concern at learning that the Government of Ontario proceeded with its announced 21.6 per cent cuts in social assistance in spite of claims that this would force large numbers of people from their homes.

28. The Committee is concerned that the significant reductions in provincial social assistance programmes, the unavailability of affordable and appropriate housing and widespread discrimination with respect to housing create obstacles to women escaping domestic violence. Many women are forced, as a result of those obstacles, to choose between returning to or staying in a violent situation, on the one hand, or homelessness and inadequate food and clothing for themselves and their children, on the other.

29. The Committee notes that Aboriginal women living on reserves do not enjoy the same right as women living off reserves to an equal share of matrimonial property at the time of marriage breakdown.

30. The Committee notes with concern that at least six provinces in Canada (including Quebec and Ontario) have adopted "workfare" programmes that either tie the right to social assistance to compulsory employment schemes or reduce the level of benefits when recipients, who are usually young, assert their right to choose freely what type of work they wish to do. In many cases, these programmes constitute work without the protection of fundamental labour rights and labour standards legislation. The Committee further notes that in the case of the Province of Quebec, those workfare schemes are implemented despite the opinion of the Human Rights Commission and the decisions of the Human Rights Tribunal that those programmes constitute discrimination based on social status or age.