

Government Orders

education our youth receive, the less chances they will have in receiving an education.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when we have to put our emphasis on investment in our children and our youth, it is somewhat disappointing that the federal government is moving toward cutting many of the social and education programs that in fact would help in getting the country out of the difficulties we are in. There is no better investment the government can make than investing in our youth. There is no better way in dealing with reducing the level of deficit in Canada than investing in our youth.

• (1340)

Bill C-69 and Bill C-32 will be causing a lot of damage to the way we provide and offer our social programs across the country. Unfortunately CAP was the only remaining open-ended program that was cost shared between the provinces and the federal government. There was no limit on how much a province could choose to spend on some of the social services they are offering. The only limit they had is the fifty-fifty sharing agreement.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the fact that approximately 40 per cent of the people who get welfare payments are children, research shows that poor children tend to have more health problems, greater difficulties in school and more involvement in crime than other children, and the cap on CAP makes sure that Canada does even less than in the past to combat these problems.

According to Dr. Robin Walker, president of the Canadian Council on Children and Youth: "About 40 per cent of social assistance recipients are children. The recent cap on CAP means that there will be less money to meet the basic needs of these children, to help their parents escape the welfare roles or to combat the negative effects of child poverty". He is absolutely right.

In fact, the situation is even more difficult when we look at the approximately 60 per cent of Indians living off-reserve in Canada who receive social assistance. A disproportionately large number of native children living off-reserve are cared for within British Columbia's child welfare system. We can conclude that aboriginal people in Canada represent one of the largest groups affected by restrictions on the amount of CAP transfer payments to the provinces.

Christopher McCormick, national spokesman on native issues for the Native Council of Canada, indicated: "Cuts to the Canada Assistance Plan will be a national disaster for aboriginal people who already live in Third World conditions".

On this subject matter one could speak on and on forever. The bottom line is that it is really up to this government to decide what it really wants to do. Does it want to invest in the future of Canadians now, or does it want to shut down operations and go home?

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment on Bill C-32. First, I would like to congratulate my colleague, the member for Ottawa Centre, who has just put so well and so correctly all the damage this bill will cause.

I too of course am against this Bill C-32 because it will result in cuts to the provinces. We already know how badly the province of Ontario is mismanaged by the present New Democratic government that is there. Take that and add to it the cuts in transfer payments and we are in for some major difficulty. My fear is that these cuts to the provinces will result in our inability to train our population because a great Canadian once said the following about our ability to compete as a nation, Mr. Speaker, and I ask you to pay close attention to this. He said:

First, we require co-operation to re-establish the concept of working together as Canadians first. The concept around which this nation was built.

Second, we must make an effort to ensure that we have the capital required to finance national development in the 1980s, including a commitment from all sides to avoid the kind of vexatious and punitive policies that serve only to drive away Canadian foreign capital.

Third, we need a major national program to train and retrain the richest resource of all, our people, so that all Canadians may share in our development by working and by paying our own way.

An hon. member: Who was that enlightened person?

Mr. Boudria: I am glad my colleagues just asked me who that great Canadian was, because I just quoted from the book *Where I Stand* written by one Brian Mulroney.

An hon. member: That must have been a long time ago.

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments. I think the statement made in the book is a true statement. There is a lot of merit to it. I think the challenge of the government is in fact to do the delivery that would match what is in the statement.