

significant withdrawal by the federal government from the provision of social programs, programs that are essential to the well-being of all Canadians.

CLC, therefore, does not support the bill.

What about the National Action Committee on the Status of Women? In her statement to the Standing Committee, Janet Maher, Co-chairman of NAC's 52% Campaign, as it was called, said:

I think we need to take care, in trying to solve problems such as deficit reduction, that we don't leave the country in a worse position that we started with, and that is the main reason why we want to ask the standing committee to reconsider its support for both Bill C-20 and Bill C-32.

And what did the Canadian Union of Public Workers have to say? Judy Darcy, national president, told the committee in the same issue:

By extending the 5% cap on transfer payments to Ontario, Alberta, and B.C., you will be hurting children disproportionately, and we would ask you to please keep an obvious point in mind: it hurts just as much to be poor and hungry in a rich province as it does in a poor province.

**Senator Molgat:** The way this government is going, they will all be poor.

**Senator Frith:** Furthermore, Ms Darcy urged the introduction of legislation to reinstate the funding formula for CAP which existed prior to 1990.

I know that the views of labour and social policy activist groups are not at the top of the government's influence list, but perhaps the country will pay attention to our nurses.

The government must know that the Canadian Nurses Association had specific concerns about Bill C-32. Canada's nurses are worried about the trickle effect. They are worried that Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia will have to channel more dollars towards social assistance, and this will restrict their ability to direct funds elsewhere. This, in turn, will heighten the pressure where? Of course, on the health care system in those three provinces.

That, of course, echoes the same point made by Dennis Timbrell, long-term Ontario cabinet minister and now head of the Ontario Hospital Association, who has repeatedly pointed out that the budget problems facing Ontario will result in hospital closure.

**Senator Gigantès:** You find this funny? You really do? They are laughing.

**Senator Frith:** I know. I said they were laughing. But earlier I made the point that the government is laughing, and I am trying to list the people they are laughing at.

It will result, Mr. Timbrell says, in hospital closures and longer emergency room line-ups. That is one line-up that does not make the distinction between the wealthy, the privileged and the poor.

So while we are laughing, just remember that anyone can find themselves in a long emergency line-up, and the lines will be lengthened by the domino effect of this legislation.

The list of opponents to the bill grows longer. Nurses do not support this bill. A prominent Conservative I just quoted does not support the bill. What about the country's academics?

Alan Moscovich, Professor of Social Administration at Carleton University, pointed out that Bill C-32 has great implications for federalism, as we know it. He stated again to that House of Commons committee, which has turned out to be a rich vein in a mine on the effects of this legislation, in issue number 25:

[CAP] remains a key component of federalism as we understand it in Canada and as it has been established over a 50-year period.

In my view, this key component of federalism should not be changed without a very wide public debate and without the necessary discussion directly between the federal government and the provinces on the redefinition of federalism. It should not be changed through program limits and funding limits which have the effect of shifting the balance of joint and equal responsibility towards a greater responsibility to the provinces.

We notice that the principle, the principle of asymmetry in federalism, is expressed in this bill because it singles out particular provinces that will not continue to benefit from what was introduced as a truly federal policy applying to all provinces.

So the search continues for supporters of this legislation. Do senior citizens who have spent a lifetime building this country and assigning to taxation large portions of their income to build up this kind of program, do they support the bill? The Council of Senior Citizens of British Columbia were plain and effective when they spoke to the Standing Committee, and again I am quoting from issue number 24:

We want Bill C-69 killed and Bill C-20 and Bill C-32 defeated, and the restoration of those moneys that have already been chiselled away in the last few years. The provinces need that money.

Here we have the metaphor not of dismantling but of chiselling away at these programs which, of course, is what the government has done. This is just one further example of it.

Because the government rushed Bill C-32 through the House of Commons with such haste, I know that not everyone or every group with a view to express had a chance to be heard. So there may have been some people who supported this legislation. If so, they did not show in the committee's reports. I know that many organizations which were heard on this bill's predecessor, C-69, were not afforded the opportunity to be heard again, and those of which I am speaking were not supporting it. Perhaps some groups spoke in favour of this limitation on the Canada Assistance Plan at earlier parliamentary hearings. If that is so, I have been unable to find a record of it, but in searching the record I have found more groups who are 100 per cent opposed to a limitation on CAP.