

*Government Orders*

We see massive cut-backs in social housing, where this could not occur. The saddest day for many of us was when the motion came to establish a child's bill of rights, where we would recognize that young children in our country have some rights. Granted, our colleagues and friends, the Liberals voted in favour of this. As a block, the New Democrats voted in favour of it. It was a private members' day. We voted row by row because individuals were supposed to be counted. But no, the Conservative government laid on a whip and said: "Every Tory member in this place must vote against a children's bill of rights."

Can you imagine what kind of a signal that sends to this country, Madam Speaker? The government could have supported and ignored the legislation, but they voted against it. They stood in their places, dozens and dozens of Conservative members voting against Canada establishing a children's bill of rights. No wonder the people of this country are becoming cynical with this government.

Why would we be surprised? In the budget presentation the Conservative members got on their feet and were applauding when the Minister of Finance said: "Do you know how we are going to save money? We are going to cut back and make veterans who are lying sick in hospitals pay more for their room and board". How low and mean and nasty can you get? The conservatives clapped and applauded that initiative to hit the veterans. Of all the people in this country, those who are lying in a hospital bed are told that they have to pay more now.

That is only the beginning. Without any hesitation, we can afford spending \$40 million a day on our defence, but we cannot afford women's shelters. We have to close them down. We asked the Minister responsible for the Status of Women whether she would intervene. No, she thinks this is a good idea. We cannot afford women's shelters across this country. What kind of a country are we coming to?

When people come to Canada, becoming a Canadian citizen means certain things. For example, it means you can have a pension when you retire. But this government has just changed the rules. They said that only some people can now qualify for pensions. If you have worked your life and have set aside money and have prepared yourself for your retirement years so you have some income, you are not going to get a Canada Pension. If you can prove that you have a certain income, you do not get Canada Pension any more. A fundamental principle of what it means to be a Canadian is that when you retire after contributing to the development of the greatest

country in the world, you are entitled to Canada Pension. But this government says: "No you are not".

Another element of our citizenship is something we call family allowance for every child, whether they are from western Canada or eastern Canada, whether they live in Quebec or Manitoba, whether they are wealthy or poor, francophone or anglophone. The government is now saying that no, not everybody in this country gets family allowance any more. So, thousands and thousands of families who would normally be eligible for family allowance, are no longer eligible. It is the Conservative view of the world.

That is just the beginning. Do we not recall the promises and promises of a few years ago that we would have a child care program in this country. We are one of the few western countries now that does not have a comprehensive child care program. And do we have that? Nary a word. No child care.

The other day we saw cuts to post-secondary education. The increases that would normally be going to develop Canada's most valuable resource, our young people, will be capped. Then a fee is going to be added, so a student in need of a loan will be charged a user fee now. A student may say: "that is okay, because normally I go and work in a Challenge '90 program in the summer. I will use one of the federal government's SEED programs so at least I will have a summer job and I will save and scrimp for my education." The government says: "Hold it. That is off now." There have been massive cuts to that.

The government does not want to support young people preparing for their education. "We do not want to make it easy to get a student loan. We are going to establish a user fee. We do not want to continue to invest, as we have, in colleges, vocational schools, universities and technical colleges." What kind of a government is this that is failing to recognize that our most important resource is not oil, codfish or coal. It is our young people, and they are being abandoned by this government.

Do you recall the day, Madam Speaker, when the minister responsible for native people thought he had a great idea. Rather than encourage native young people to go to university, college, vocational school or technical school to develop the necessary skills to enable native people to provide the necessary financial and social and economic infrastructure for their people, he limited again the opportunity for native young people for post-secondary educational opportunities. What kind of investment in the future is that?