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We are dealing with an NDP caucus here in Ottawa that speaks out of one side of its mouth while comrade Bob Rae at Queen's Park is doing so much damage to the provincial economy in Ontario that it really behoves the federal NDP members here to call their friend at Queen's Park and say: "Bob Rae, back off. Back off. Create a positive climate for business in the province of Ontario in order to ensure that we can start rebuilding its economy".

As the employment critic of the Official Opposition, I have had the duty over the last number of weeks to examine very closely the unemployment situation on a national basis. We all know, as a result of the six weeks we have had in our ridings, that the country is literally on its knees. Canadians are suffering. Not only are they losing their jobs, but they are losing their homes, their cars, their businesses, their dignity. This government simply does not realize the extent of the hardship and suffering.

There are 1.42 million Canadians who are unemployed. We have to think about that—1.42 million. That is 1,420,000 Canadians "officially unemployed". There are several hundred thousand more who have dropped out of the labour market and who are no longer looking for work. That is a lot of people who are suffering.

On top of that, there are over 2 million Canadians on welfare. In the province of Ontario, as I indicated, there was a 9.7 per cent unemployment rate in December. The January unemployment rate will be out tomorrow and there is every indication that the unemployment rate will rise. There are 509,000 people unemployed in the province of Ontario. There are 1.2 million Canadians collecting unemployment insurance. Last year the total cost of the delivery of unemployment insurance was over \$20 billion; \$20,378,000,000.

As far as it is concerned on the international scene, Canada ranks second in unemployment of the OECD countries. Only Ireland is higher than Canada, with an unemployment rate of 16.4 per cent. In metro Toronto, 78,000 jobs were lost last year; 26,000 workers in Ontario lost their jobs in permanent layoffs of 50 or more employees.

That is the background. What does this government intend to do? With Bill C-32 it intends to limit the amount of federal transfer payments under the Canada

### *Government Orders*

Assistance Plan to "the country's three richest provinces, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia". When you are poor, you are poor and it really does not matter whether you are poor in metropolitan Toronto or if you are poor in St. John's, Newfoundland. Regardless of where you live in this country if you are poor, you are poor. The suffering is the same. The pain and anguish are the same.

This government has decided in its warped wisdom to reduce its deficit on the backs of the disadvantaged in Canadian society. When we talk about the people who are affected by the provisions of Bill C-32, it is not the wealthy, not the middle class, but the poor, the disadvantaged, those on welfare, those children living in poverty, the disabled, the elderly.

The government says: "We have a mandate to reduce the deficit, to reduce the debt". It does not tell Canadians that in the seven years it has been in office this government has more than doubled the national debt. It has the unmitigated audacity to blame the previous Liberal administration for the difficulties this government finds itself in.

With this particular bill, the government now wants to restrict the level of federal assistance that will flow to those three provinces, Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario. As I indicated, there are 509,000 people in the province of Ontario unemployed, 124,000 in Alberta and 168,000 unemployed in the province of British Columbia. As far as those on welfare, 917,000 people in the province of Ontario are on welfare, 156,000 in Alberta, and 244,000 in British Columbia. The suffering exists in those provinces as well as the other provinces in Canada.

I note that there is but one minute left in my remarks. I was about to go into the history of the Canada Assistance Plan. Some members were around back then and know the work that Lester Pearson and the Liberal government did some 25 years ago to bring in the Canada Assistance Plan that has served to help needy Canadians in a very significant way. With regret, it is the Conservative government that intends to cut back.

We will fight this bill. We will continue to vote against this bill. We urge the government to implement the Liberal recovery plan that was announced by the Leader of the Official Opposition a few days ago. The government has taken a cross-your-fingers, hands-off approach to the Canadian economy, allowing hundreds of thou-