

Government Orders

been on UI with no assistance from the federal government.

There are other programs and other social problems which the federal government is simply washing its hands of and having the provinces pick up.

I want to talk a little bit about foetal alcohol syndrome, which we are just beginning to recognize as a serious health, educational and social problem in this country.

Our committee on health issues has been examining that issue. Last week, people from the city of Vancouver appeared before the committee. They pointed out that in the downtown core of Vancouver 30 per cent of all children born in the last two years suffer from foetal alcohol syndrome.

Eighty per cent of these kids end up in the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare. There are costs which the province must pick up in terms of provision of services to those children in care. They also provide preventive services to women who are likely to produce children with foetal alcohol syndrome.

They provide counselling services and day care. They provide support for women's shelters, housing and social housing, all at the expense of the province. We know that for women who have a foetal alcohol syndrome child the likelihood that the next child will also have the same medical and social problems is dramatically increased.

The way to prevent this is to provide a variety of support services to that woman on an ongoing basis. These support services are now being paid for under the Canada Assistance Plan, which has been capped.

There are a couple of things the federal government could do, some of which would cost it no money. They would cost absolutely no money and would prevent the occurrence of foetal alcohol syndrome.

First, it could enforce the lifestyle advertising ban on beer and spirits advertising.

• (1510)

We are not supposed to allow breweries to use lifestyle advertising to promote the increase in drinking, particularly among young people and people of child-rearing years. However this government has refused to enforce

it. The CRTC has refused to enforce it. The government has simply washed its hands of this problem and is saying to the provinces: "We are going to limit the money you have to deal with it, but we are going to force you to deal with it".

It could also introduce a national uniform program to demand labelling on all alcoholic beverages and in all establishments that serve alcohol with a health warning pointing out the dangers to the foetus of drinking during pregnancy. That would not cost the government any money. It could introduce that universally across this country and it would go a long way toward preventing the problem of foetal alcohol syndrome.

This is a federal government that is refusing to act in an area in which it could take a positive step to prevent a very difficult medical and social problem. Yet at the same time it is saying to the provinces: "We are going to leave you with that problem of caring for those kids, of providing services and foster care, of providing services in health centres, support services to the families trying to deal with these very difficult children, but we are going to cut your financial support by limiting the Canada Assistance Plan".

Even in the area of health promotion and health education and research, which the federal government is responsible for and which has an impact on this type of social problem, the federal government has cut back.

This is again an example of the government's off-loading of social problems and social responsibilities on to the provinces, while at the same time it is curtailing the provinces' ability to cope with them.

I want to speak again about one of the other program areas in which this government is very famous for getting up and saying how much it is doing, programs to deal with violence against women. With much fanfare it announced that it was going to spend \$137 million over five years to promote programs to deal with the problem of violence against women. It turned out that it was only going to spend \$15 million last year and \$20 million this year, or \$35 million over the two-year period. At the same time it is taking away billions of dollars from the provinces of British Columbia and Ontario by putting a ceiling on the CAP, the Canada Assistance Plan.