

*Government Orders*

• (1615)

The best kind of social reform we could come up with is a program of job creation. It was quite clear in the election campaign which party was the only one prepared to speak consistently, day in and day out, about jobs for Canadians. On October 25 we saw reflected the result that Canadians understood who was prepared to address the real concern, the unemployment crisis.

In terms of attitude in society, unfortunately we have drifted into a situation where there are far too many Canadians who seem to be accepting unemployment insurance and welfare as a way of life. I like to believe and I do believe they are a minority. Frankly I know, coming from a municipal councillor background, that some people are prepared to accept it as a way of life for themselves. We cannot allow that attitude to continue.

That is not to condemn the unemployed. Far from it. I would be the last to do that. In fact I submit that most unemployed Canadians truly want to work, but we need an attitudinal shift which has to be led by the government. We must insist that people who are willing and able to do work but unable to find work are given some gainful employment, some meaningful role to play. We will help them over the short-term crises they face until they are able to find full-time employment on their own.

Whether that will evolve into some kind of guaranteed annual income or some system of workfare I am not sure, but I know very clearly from my experience that we cannot encourage and let continue the attitude that one can just stay at home and be supported by the taxpayer. That has to be discouraged in the very small minority of people who unfortunately have that attitude.

I would like to say a word about the co-ordination of social programs. As I mentioned my own previous experience was at the municipal level. It is all too clear to those of us who come from a background in municipal government that there has been a consistent downloading of responsibility from the federal government to the provincial government and then down to the municipalities that have nowhere to pass it on to except to local property ratepayers. It is simply wrong and unconscionable that should go on.

Quite frankly the redistribution of income should be handled by the senior levels of government, by the federal and provincial governments. That is a far more just situation for the clients of the system, for the people who need assistance. It is far fairer for them and it is far more just to local taxpayers in any given municipality.

I come from London, Ontario, and represent the riding of London—Middlesex. We have seen examples of where people have come to our city from other parts of Ontario and have unfairly created a significant problem in the welfare budget of

that municipality. That very important program must be funded from federal and provincial budgets.

Yes, there is only one Canadian taxpayer. We know that, but it is not a responsibility that should fall upon the shoulders of municipalities. The Canadian Federation of Municipalities has been saying that for years. I am confident that Minister of Human Resources Development and the Minister of Finance will hear that message and take steps to redress the lack of co-ordination and of proper funding of the programs.

The area of child care was a subject referred to earlier by a Reform Party MP. There is nothing more important to fund than child care. There are people who need subsidized care. We must give that care to the children of the working poor. If we do not we see far too clearly the horrendous social problems that result. We simply delay paying the piper and create a number of problems.

With those thoughts, I am very confident as a member of the new government that we are on the right track. Real reform will take place, led by the real reform party in the House, and that is the Liberal Party.

• (1620)

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member's comments.

The hon. member expressed his views. He explained for me exactly why we are here in this House to debate. The member for Vancouver Centre questioned why we were here to debate. She said: "What we are doing really is not having consultations together". She indicated that we were pre-empting the decision. I would have to say that the hon. member who just spoke did exactly that.

I have to go back to the member's text. I do not know if he actually had this written down or if he was ad libbing. He did say that we want to help them over the short term and then we are not quite sure where they are going to go from there. He was speaking about the unemployed.

"What will this eventually mean", the hon. member asked. I would like the hon. member to clarify exactly what was meant by that statement. Having used the example of an annual guaranteed income was of some interest to me. I would like some clarification on that point.

**Mr. O'Brien:** Mr. Speaker, I had some speaking notes and I would like to correct the hon. member.

I was trying to make the point that social assistance should be short-term help, whether it is in the form of welfare or unemployment insurance. It ought to be in its best application short-term help.

I did not indicate in any way where do they go from there. Hopefully people on this short-term help will find with the assistance of government and the private sector gainful and decent employment.