

Supply

were turned down, how many appealed, how many won their appeals? Mr. Speaker, I suggest through you that if the Department of Health and Welfare is routinely turning down first-time applicants for disability pensions because they are so overloaded, the Government can quit patting itself on the back about how it is meeting the needs of those Canadians who are most in need, and get serious.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Langan: We have heard a great deal about the terrible housing crisis in Canada. In this House and in the media we have heard a lot about it since the 34th Parliament has been convened. Some of the problems are because of land speculation, especially in the larger urban centres. Some of the problems are because of high interest rates, and some of the problems are because of zero occupancy rates. This is a phenomenon that does not just happen in large cities, but it is happening in suburban and rural Canada as well.

The national sales tax that has been introduced is a problem as well. The point that I want to make about housing in Canada is that increasingly the face of the homeless in this country are the faces of Canadian children. That is not acceptable. But that does not cut any ice with the grinch who stole the balanced Budget from our children's future. No, the Government has reverted to 1986 levels of funding for an already inadequate co-op housing program with adjustments for inflation. If that is not bad enough, they will save \$55 million by discontinuing the rehabilitation assistance program which provides financing assistance to landlords to upgrade their properties, a program which has been used across this country by municipalities to provide adequate and affordable housing. This is another \$55 million toward the paid-up Rolls Royce.

The biggest shock to all Canadian families has got to be the impact of the proposed unemployment insurance cuts. The Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mrs. McDougall) put them in before the Budget was introduced to take a little of the heat off. The pot was sweetened a little bit by changing the paternity leave benefits, and allowing those workers over 65 to participate in the program. But no one was fooled. Everyone understood that the Government had to respond to a Supreme Court decision.

What of those Canadians who, in addition to now being forced to foot the entire bill for unemployment insurance along with their employers, at the same time have their eligibility cut? Does the Government think that they are fooled by this program of privatization of the unemployment insurance program? Small business is not fooled. The workers are not fooled. They will be joining the workers while they fund this private program.

Does the Government really believe it is helping those most in need when it ensures that this new unemployment insurance program will exclude seasonal workers, mostly women, farm workers, mostly women, fish processors, mostly women, building trades workers with increasing numbers of women? Who may still have the privilege of paying for the insurance program? Those same workers who may indeed never again be eligible to claim. Those workers are not fooled.

• (1550)

In all the areas I have discussed, women are the hardest hit by the cut-backs of the Government. Women, especially working moms, are the most in need of safe, accessible and affordable child care. Women who are unemployed are most often in jobs that are short term or part time and are less likely to qualify for UI benefits. In addition, the increased premium would hurt them more because they have proportionately less disposable income.

Women will be the hardest hit by the proposed federal sales tax. On average, women only earn 66 per cent of what men earn, and generally women spend a greater proportion of their disposable income on goods and services, especially if they have children.

Women first faced deindexing of family allowance, I might add one of the only benefits that goes directly to women for their children. Now universality is under fire, and the Government plans to grab it back.

There are more women than men over the age of 65 who are receiving Old Age Security pensions. Four years ago the Government attempted to deindex those women's pensions, and again the Government has begun the erosion of pensions.

Women will feel the effect of cut-backs in transfer payments to the provinces. A 1 per cent cut-back