

Supply

This is another example of this government totally disregarding the rightful interests in certain programs and policies in this country.

In my final remarks, let me say this. Unemployment insurance is good for the workers. In times of unemployment it sees them through. It helps them pay for their food, their rent and their basic necessities during hard times when they are not working. It also helps business because it keeps money in circulation. It reduces the number of bankruptcies. It means that people are spending money, money they get from unemployment insurance for the basic things of life.

It is not like the Great Depression of the thirties when there was no unemployment insurance, but that is the direction in which this government is going.

[Translation]

Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, I was in the habit of listening respectfully to the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce when he spoke, in view of his long experience, but I can only deplore hearing him make comments such as those we heard a moment ago. It is absolutely unbelievable to claim that the federal government is passing its responsibilities for social assistance on to the provincial and municipal governments.

An hon. member: Demagogy at work.

Mr. Harvey (Chicoutimi): When you think that Gérard Larose used to say that our government should be criticized for being antisocial. The numbers speak for themselves: since 1984, this government has increased its social commitments by 50 per cent. These are the exact figures, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce will know there is between \$44 billion and \$66 billion to help the provinces meet their commitments for education, health, welfare, and so on.

Someone also stated this afternoon on behalf of the leader of the Bloc Québécois that he was very sorry for the poor. To this gentleman who has a sporadic, intermittent concern for the poor, I might offer this piece of advice: do not live 500 kilometres away from your riding; visit your riding regularly, weekly, to address the issues affecting your riding; look after your municipalities.

It is our duty. These people having voted for our party, I feel under the moral obligation to do a good job at

representing them in government, because the leader of the Bloc Québécois is illegitimate.

I have also heard folks from the FTQ say that we should go after the companies. You may be assured, Mr. Speaker, that since our government came to power, 50 000 companies are paying their taxes regularly. We have brought the rate down from 2.7 per cent to 0.7 per cent, and this 0.7 per cent is made up of small businesses with 5, 10 or 15 employees who have had the misfortune of having deficits and which are amortizing them over a few years.

Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. Without trying to outdo the Official Opposition in wild statements, I can tell you some people will vote against Bill C-105 because of the freeze on their salaries. They will not admit it, because the bill does contain some very progressive measures. Let me tell you something else. The FTQ says that an area like ours will lose \$60 million, but they left out a couple of things. They failed to mention that \$4 billion, 20 per cent of the total amount, as taken from the unemployment insurance fund to also be invested in areas like ours. They also failed to mention that the contributions of many small businesses have been frozen, and that they will get tax credits when they hire new employees—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. The length of speeches being limited to five minutes, I must, in all fairness, give the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce the opportunity to respond.

[English]

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, no wonder the government is at 18 per cent in the polls when you get the kind of statement we just heard from the hon. member. No wonder the government's credibility is almost zero in this country.

Who is the member trying to fool when he suggests to this House and to the Canadian people that the government has increased transfer payments to the provinces? There is no doubt in our minds that the decrease in transfer payments to the provinces is in the millions of dollars.