pounded with these cutbacks, it really exacerbates the pain.

So we on this side of the House are concerned about the deficit and the debt. We know it is a tough complex problem, but there is no way we are going to stand up here in this House and just say that this realignment of CAP is something that we take lightly. We are trying to communicate to you that the once secure, rich province of Ontario—and I am only speaking for Ontario right now—is, for the first time ever, on its economic knees. Combined with that, it is natural that we have a morale problem, and we have got to get the morale of this country rolling again. We especially have to get it going in those provinces that traditionally have had an ability during an economic crisis to generate wealth and keep the whole nation moving along.

We talked a little bit about this last Friday and I am going to repeat myself. I do not believe that the way we lift the morale of this country off its knees is by further cuts. I also do not share the view of members of the New Democratic Party which is out to somehow punish the rich. They say they don't pay any taxes—and there are some who don't pay any, and I think we have got to address that—but we are not anti-rich here and we are not anti-business. We need a healthy business climate in order to create jobs, in order to get this economy going again.

I would be very careful about putting a stigma on people who can create wealth in this country. I want to repeat what I said on Friday; we need to attract investment to this country, we don't need investment to flee this country. We need investment, foreign investment especially, to look at this country and see that it is productive, that the morale is good despite the fact that we are facing a tough global economy, and we have got to sort of do what we have to do to pick that morale up. We should not be picking, with respect to the NDP, on corporate Canada and upper income people who we need here to continue to invest and to continue to create jobs, the ones that are left. There are a lot of businesses in this country right now that are on the edge, that are having second thoughts as to whether or not they want to continue their presence in this country and I do not think we should be doing anything that would cause them to second-guess their commitment to investment in this country. We need foreign investment here.

I want to repeat what I said last Friday. The way to attract foreign investment, the way to get the capital we need that will create jobs, that will ultimately look after the deficit and debt that we are all concerned about, is by creating a productive environment where people will have the feeling that they want to go back to work, that they want to learn more and that they want to go back to retrain themselves.

Any cutback in any area that drives people further away from getting up off their knees or getting out of their current slump is counterproductive to the entire economic fabric of this country, so I would humbly request that the Conservative Party reconsider this cutback to the most disadvantaged people in our community.

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I too, want to participate in the debate on this piece of legislation.

It has received a great deal of attention both in terms of the provincial governments which have been affected by it and, more importantly, the people who will be affected by this legislation.

The purpose of Bill C-32, an act to amend the Canada Assistance Plan, tends to extend the 5 per cent ceiling on the rate of growth and transfers to the Canada Assistance Plan from two years to five years. This cap applies only to the provinces which do not receive equalization payments. They include British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.

I think it worth while for members of the House to be reminded of the purpose of the Canada Assistance Plan. I know members on this side of the House have been very concerned about what the Government of Canada was doing with regard to transfer payments.

It goes back to Bill C-69, introduced by this administration, which in effect curtailed the amount of money going to provincial governments to provide what I would deem—perhaps members opposite would interpret it differently—provided necessities for individuals in our society.

Basically, the Canada Assistance Plan was enacted in 1966 to encourage the development and the extension of assistance in welfare services programs throughout the country. Under this plan, the federal government has entered into agreements with the provinces and territories to share the costs incurred by the provinces and