

"Principal Subjects of Concern" and referring to financial resources and the like it stated:

—considering Canada's enviable situation with regard to such resources, the Committee expresses concern about the persistence of poverty in Canada. There seems to have been no measurable progress in alleviating poverty for the last decade, nor in alleviating the severity of poverty among a number of particularly vulnerable groups.

The next item stated:

—the Committee is concerned about the fact that, according to information available to it, more than half of the single mothers in Canada, as well as a large number of children, live in poverty.

It referred to the Progressive Conservative Party and stated:

The State party has not outlined any new or planned measures to remedy this situation. Of particular concern to the committee is the fact that the federal government appears to have reduced the ratio of its contributions to cost sharing agreements for social assistance.

We know that. The next item stated:

The Committee received information from non-governmental organizations about families being forced to relinquish their children to foster care because of inability to provide adequate housing or other necessities.

This is how we look abroad. It further stated:

The committee is concerned that there seems to exist no procedure to ensure that those who must depend entirely on welfare payments do not thereby derive an income which is at or above the poverty line.

The next item dealt with food banks, as the hon. member already hinted at:

A further subject of concern for the Committee is the evidence of hunger in Canada and the reliance on food banks operated by charitable organizations.

I wish members from the Conservative Party were still here to hear that. I quote again from the same document:

The Committee learned from non-governmental organizations of widespread discrimination in housing against people with children, people on social assistance, people with low incomes, and people who are indebted. Although prohibited by law in many of Canada's provinces, those forms of discrimination are apparently common. A more concerted effort to eliminate such practices would therefore seem to be in order.

Supply

The next item was:

The Committee notes the omission from the Government's written report and oral presentation of any mention of the problems of homelessness.

The Committee regretted that there were no figures available from the Government on the extent of homelessness, on the number of persons evicted annually throughout the country, on the lengths of waiting lists or the percentage of houses accessible to people with disabilities.

• (1845)

The next one was:

Given the evidence of homelessness and inadequate living conditions, the Committee is surprised that expenditures on social housing are as low as 1.3 per cent of government expenditures.

It continued:

The Committee is concerned that in some court decisions and in recent constitutional discussions, social and economic rights have been described as mere "policy objectives" of governments rather than as fundamental human rights.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The time for questions or comments has now expired.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's comments. He drew to our attention the government's failure with respect to social programs by quoting a neutral third source, not opposition parties, talking about inadequacies in terms of health, food and homes. He also pointed out the inadequacies and the failings of the government with respect to living up to its commitments in the area of the environment, controlling the deficit, the debt, and the creation of jobs. It is really unfortunate he did not have more time, for which I am partially responsible because we are splitting the time.

I want to talk not only about the government's failings but about the performance of the government. For the past nine years the Conservatives have shamelessly promoted themselves as the masters of economic policy. The image however is at odds with reality. As recent counts show the economic record of the Conservative government has been one of unremitting disaster.

On April 14 the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops released a report condemning the high level of unemployment that continues to plague Canada. A few days later Canadians received news of an International