

the shelter for the homeless, not the people in the bureaucracies that are doing the arithmetic.

The question honourable senators must ask themselves is: Are there any Canadians who support this bill? Things are very, very good, we heard today from the Leader of the Government. They actually think things are very, very good. So who supports Bill C-32? Well, the Minister of Finance introduced the bill last September 18. Honourable senators must know, however, that the Minister of Finance cannot really support this bill, even though he introduced it, because the Minister of Finance is loyal to the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister pledged at the United Nations Children's Summit that Canada would take extraordinary steps to lift children out of poverty.

We have seen what the results of this bill will be on children who are in poverty. This legislation flies in the face of a solemn commitment made by the Prime Minister at the United Nations. Looking through the list of Canadians for people who might support this bill, surely the Minister of Finance cannot belong to that group because, being loyal to the Prime Minister, he would not support legislation that flies in the face of that solemn commitment made by the Prime Minister.

I know some honourable senators may believe that the Minister of Finance is so busy in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister that he may not follow all of the Prime Minister's international addresses and solemn pledges. God knows there have been lots of them. There is no doubt, however, that the Minister of Finance heard the words crafted by the Prime Minister for the 1991 Speech from the Throne. I saw the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance sit in this very chamber when the Speech from the Throne was read. What did it say? Here it is:

Our children are the most important yet most vulnerable members of our society.

We now understand what the effect of this legislation before us will have on those children, particularly poor ones.

Last September, at the Children's Summit in New York, the attention of people everywhere was focused on children at risk. Seventy-one leaders pledged that that moment would last a decade.

This is the Governor General speaking on behalf of Mr. Mulroney's government.

My government will bring forward a plan to implement the commitments it made that day; the objective is to see Canadian girls and boys better educated—

We know the effect that it will have on their education.

—better protected—

We know the effect that it will have on their protection.

—and better nurtured—

We know the effect it will have on their nourishment.

—so that they can make their own contributions to Canada's future.

Can it be possible that, at the time of the Speech from the Throne, those words could have been uttered so cynically that

[Senator Frith.]

the government knew that they were about to come along with this iniquitous legislation that we have before us now? I think perhaps it is possible that they were that cynical.

Does the National Anti-Poverty Organization support this bill? Well, here is what that organization had to say:

People on welfare are already struggling to survive on inadequate benefits.

The league I am speaking of is referring to this particular bill.

This bill reduces their chances of seeing welfare rates rise to cover real living costs. It also makes it more likely that the provinces will try to put restrictions on the number of people who can get welfare, the length of time they can receive benefits, and the type of benefits they receive.

If I may interject: Yes. What other consequence can this bill produce?

• (1010)

It means there is less chance that provinces will find long-term solutions to give people the opportunity to get decent-paying jobs. Instead, the provinces will probably continue to pressure people on welfare to take low-paying jobs without child care and other supports—jobs that leave these people in poverty.

I know that I have described the sad situation in Ontario in detail to some honourable senators. They may feel the situation is different in British Columbia, and that perhaps this bill is supported in that province. Well, listen to the words of the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia on appearing before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. This is from issue number 21.

When the forerunner to Bill C-20 and Bill C-32, Bill C-69, was first introduced it assumed that the caseloads in the three provinces would either decrease with improving economic activity or, at worst, remain stable.—

What do we hear from the experts here?

I think we are all becoming aware now that this is just not the case.

The Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. said that with increasing caseloads, due in part to changes in unemployment insurance—we know where that came from—and more importantly to poor economic performance, the freeze on CAP will prevent British Columbia from keeping up with the escalating demands. Some British Columbians in need will simply have to go without. So the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. does not support the bill.

Another group to appear before the House of Commons Committee was the Canadian Labour Congress. Did they support the bill? To quote again from the committee's reports, and this is from issue number 24, they said:

... the social safety net has been compromised in Bill C-32 through the continued ceiling on the Canada Assistance Plan for the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. Taken together, these measures constitute a