

*Government Orders*

When is this government going to assume the responsibility that belongs to the government of the day to ensure that no child is in poverty?

• (1200)

When is it going to assume its moral and political responsibility to ensure that social services are available for children when they need them? When is it going to assume its responsibility as a tax collecting agency of the state to ensure that the priorities of tax collection and expenditures are on children? When is it going to assume its moral responsibility as the state as the family collapses because of a lack of support systems to deal with the problems of that family collapse? Pious words, phoney political speeches and lying promises do not solve this problem.

In the last federal election in this country the Prime Minister said that we would protect the social services and the social fabric to ensure that the impacts of any economic changes from trade agreements would not be felt. As we talk about this particular bill on corrections, we guarantee a supply of young offenders right across the spectrum in terms of drug abuse, in terms of violent crime and in terms of prostitution simply because of the economic devastation that has been wreaked upon this country by this government's economic policies with absolutely no moral sense of responsibility of picking up the pieces.

It was this government that told the Canadian people that the Canadian safety net, built up over so many years by consensus and previous federal administrations, both Liberal and Conservative, on a mixed economy basis, had a consensus about social responsibility in this country. In the last 50 years we have never seen such devastation to ordinary folks at the low end of the scale as we have under a *laissez-faire*, right-wing government that is neo-Conservative and comes in with this kind of clap-trap bill to suggest somehow it is dealing with the problem.

The Tories are not even dealing with the problem and worse, they are not even dealing with the cause. Who is it who can justify the fact that they are capping social service expenditures right across this country when young people are on the streets as prostitutes? Who is it who can justify the capping of social expenditures while young people are dropping out from schools at a rate of 30 per cent before they finish high school? Is that the legacy this government wants to be known by?

As a politician, I have no hesitation in branding that legacy into the forehead of the less than human face of the Tory government in this country. You can go to any city and see the consequences of this social devastation. You can go to any town and village and see unemployed young people desperately looking for a place in this society in which they can express themselves in a positive manner. You can see the devastation of drug abuse, prostitution and violence simply because they are a homeless, faceless group in our society, totally neglected and have no idea of what the responsibility of this Chamber ultimately is in their lives.

Go into the urban areas and speak to a single mother and ask her how she gets by on her welfare payments and still has the time, the energy and the commitment to give comfort and love to her child. It is all right for the later day yuppies who are privileged in our society by a rapidly changing tax system that allows the wealthy to have nannies and day care for their children. The poor end of the scale that needs these basic support services for families, for crime prevention, if nothing else, is being left out.

To burden this House with a bill that is fraught with all kinds of political jargon about somehow changing things in our society is to make a mockery of the whole system that we say we are committed to as politicians.

How do we morally justify the fact that in the last five years low income families have actually seen their disposable income reduced the first time since the Great Depression in this country? Who is it on the government side who is standing up and speaking for the poor? Who is it on the government side who is standing up and demanding basic services for young people? Who is it on the government side who is responsible to ensure that no