

*Adjournment Debate*

Statistics Canada estimates that the oil and gas companies will cut capital spending by 14 per cent this year and \$5.7 billion in 1981 to \$4.98 billion. The biggest cut will occur in the exploration and development drilling which will fall 17 per cent from 1991 levels to about \$1.9 billion.

These are statistics which the government says translate somehow into afterward picture. I can guarantee those people opposite that these facts indicate no such thing. They mean that 46,000 people are unemployed in my city of Edmonton. There are 28 per cent more people living below the poverty line this year than last year.

It means 98,000 food hampers were distributed to men, women and children in Edmonton last year. The Canada Assistance Program is a shared cost fiscal agreement between the federal government and the provinces. In the 1990 federal budget the government decided the so-called have provinces should be limited to a 5 per cent increase annually in their entitlements under CAP until 1992.

The 1991 federal budget extended this unilateral action until 1995. This type of fiscal terrorism is just one way the current government is sowing the seeds of division in our country.

I said that the minister is playing shell games with provincial transfer payments and I repeat the allegation today. Can the minister or his agents give this House an indication as to what concrete steps they have taken to co-operate with Ontario, B.C., and Alberta in order to come to a reasonable agreement on increases in CAP transfers? If no such assurances are given, can we assume this government is presiding over the destruction of federal-provincial fiscal relationship? Have they no sense of responsibility, no sense of Canadians as a national family, no ability to see Canada as a single great nation?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Barry Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, the government is very much aware of the fact that the slowing down has deeply affected some Canadians. However, the social safety net in Canada, which includes the federal unemployment insurance program as well as the various welfare programs cost-shared by the two levels of government, is especially aimed at helping Canadians through such hard times.

The federal government has clearly increased the amount of assistance provided through these programs, and that has helped make the situation easier to bear.

[*English*]

The total amount of federal UI program benefits going to unemployed Canadians has grown at an average rate of 8.8 per cent per year. Furthermore, the federal share of social assistance payments to the needy has gone up from \$4 billion in 1984-85 to \$6.6 billion in 1991-92.

Federal expenditures in these two programs will grow by 10 per cent, which means that in 1993 the funds available will grow by \$2.3 billion over 1991-92 to help the needy and unemployed through these programs.

In putting a ceiling on payments under the Canada Assistance Plan, we are simply asking the three fiscally stronger provinces, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, to help contain the federal share of welfare costs to increases of 5 per cent per year.

The federal deficit control plan is already making its impact on the Canadian economy in the form of lower inflation rates and lower interest rates.

In conclusion, this government believes that the best income security for Canadians is a job. Our record speaks for itself. Since 1984 over 1.3 million jobs have been created. The number of persons living in low income as defined by Statistics Canada dropped from 4.4 million in 1984 to 3.8 million in 1990.

An effective healthy economy that provides jobs for Canadians will mean that fewer and fewer Canadians will depend upon welfare and UI.

## BEEF INDUSTRY

**Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex):** Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, May 6, I asked the Minister of Agriculture why Canadian consumers are not being informed that the imported beef they are buying in Canada may well be cheap, tough U.S. cow beef. This is no roll beef or ungraded beef coming in mainly from the United States.

On April 12, 1989, I first raised this issue in the House during Question Period. At that time one million pounds of this product per week were coming into Canada. The minister at the time responded that there must be a need for this product or it would not be coming in. Two years later it was not one million pounds per week but it was 3 million pounds a week coming into Canada.