

His family is poor. His father was laid off. It is because of free trade, the plant manager said. His mom stays home to care for his little sister. They cannot afford day care. He goes to school hungry. He is small for his age, unhealthy, humiliated, and falling further and further behind in school. The other children tease him, call him names because of his old clothes. Is this the face of the leaner system? Does cost-cutting mean taking security away from a child and his parents?

Only 6 per cent of the federal deficit is attributed to social programs. Meanwhile the government can raise, according to the book *The Quick and the Dead*—Brian Mulroney, *Big Business and the Seduction of Canada* by Linda McQuaig, an additional \$6.8 billion by closing off tax breaks.

Let me just say a word about this book written by Linda McQuaig, a leading journalist. This book is a shocking portrait of greed and ambition in the highest places and what it has done to the fate of the nation. Are we trying to amend, with this bill, Canada?

Why not close the tax breaks and stop taking food from the mouths of children? Is the government afraid it will become unpopular with the people it feels matter most, the rich company executives and their heirs? Are they the people who make up that 12 per cent still in the polls supporting this government? Are the other 88 per cent of Canadians in the middle class and the working poor? I imagine so.

No, the government could not risk jeopardizing its popularity by offending the wealthy and big business. Forget the small businesses of this country. Forget that most taxes in this country are paid by the middle class.

Once an author and philosopher, John Ruskin, said in his work *Unto This Last, Essay iii*:

Whereas it has long been known and declared that the poor have no right to the property of the rich, I wish it also to be known and declared that the rich have no right to the property of the poor.

Why does this government not leave the poor what they have, and try to improve the lot of the poor, instead of taking what little they have left?

For 1.5 million Canadians, they no longer think about the problems of income tax, and as likely, property tax is no longer a concern either. Why? Because the government took away their jobs and will probably take away

Government Orders

their homes as well through its strictly private marketplace, rules-of-the-jungle boardroom logic. They are unemployed and fearful about the future of their families. To be unemployed and poor in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia feels no different than being unemployed in any other province, including my province of Manitoba. Poor is poor.

And 54 per cent of these poor people live in the three aforementioned provinces to be affected by this bill. The government calls these provinces rich. Rich compared to what provinces? It is relative. Should every province's greatest aspiration be to have a deficit as well? I worry about the precedent it is setting for the other provinces later on, because this government has an obsession with deficit reduction.

I would just like to briefly call to the attention of the House that the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology in its report of January 1, 1991 on children and poverty, *Toward a Better Future* clearly states that it will invest in our poor children. We will reap fivefold more in 20 years if spending on the poor is not deficit spending but investment in the future of our country.

This is a finance bill, according to the government. At the briefing session held for the opposition, officers from the Department of Finance explained the purpose of the bill, the need for restraint and cautioned: "The government cannot be a good financial steward on behalf of Canadian taxpayers if such transfers were allowed to grow without any restraint".

Where was the briefing from the Department of National Health and Welfare, explaining how, on behalf of Canadians, the government was showing itself a good social steward by forcing this bill through the House? I did not see the minister of health stand to defend this bill. I wonder if he is ashamed of his government. I believe he should be.

He knows he has lashed the burden of the national debt on to the backs of the sick, the youth, the unemployed and the seniors of Canada. It is battered women, forsaken children and all the abused who have been harnessed with the debt. There is no security, no safety, in this place called Canada.

Making the poor pay the national debt has become the life force driving this government.