

*Government Orders*

how the government is hurting them because of the freeze on student aid.

The problem could be cured with a stroke of the pen, but what a beneficial stroke it would be. It would send a signal to thousands of Canadians, young men and women, who are out there now with the knowledge that they are not able to get to university this fall because they cannot afford to go and, under the present rules, they cannot qualify for the necessary funding to go. With one stroke of the pen, the Minister of Finance or the delegated minister could solve this problem by just bringing the rules for student aid, the qualification criteria, up to 1990 standards.

So often in the House we are told, in effect, as I was a few minutes ago, that it is not enough to criticize, and asked: "How would you do it?" Well, I have just said to the minister, to the House and to the government, how we think it should be done. It is very simple. Be fair and apply 1990 guidelines to the student aid program, instead of allowing the 1984 guidelines to stay there. They are not only six years out of date, but are doing some real damage in terms of interfering with the capacity of thousands of Canadians to attend post-secondary education this fall.

• (1540)

I raised that issue as an example of how government spending rules can impact unfavourably or, to put it more bluntly, can hurt ordinary Canadians. There are many other examples.

We know the example of the women's funding issue. The government finally relented on that and agreed to extend the funding for another year. I am delighted to see that my friend, the minister responsible for the status of women is here. I want to say to her that, while the extension of funding took the heat off for the short term, she will owe it to women across Canada, and the cause they stand for, to go to bat to have that funding continued on a permanent basis.

In my riding there are two women's centres, one at Stephenville and one at Port aux Basques. As the minister will know, they have earned a reputation over the years of being among the better women's centres in Canada. I have seen some of the work that they do in terms of coming to the aid of people who are victims of family violence. I could cite some specific examples of

the good work that those women and their organizations have done in those two communities.

I like to think that perhaps one of the reasons that the funding was cut in the first place was that there was not a sufficiently good understanding of the work that was being done by some of those centres. If that is the case, insofar as the two centres I have mentioned are concerned, I am prepared to document for the government some of the examples of what is being done. Members of the House would be encouraged that tax money is being so well spent.

Under the aegis of the debate on this bill, I wish to address the whole issue of regional development, a subject I am sure my friends from rural Quebec would love to hear about. In fact, I would like to hear them talk about the issue because they will know that the policies of this government have devastated the capacity of rural Canada to survive, whether talking about the closing of rural post offices; the closing of rail lines in Newfoundland a year or so ago and now here on the mainland Canada; women's funding, which I mentioned has temporarily got a reprieve so we will not beat that one to death right now in terms of an example; or the cut-backs in ACOA, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency funding.

In many ways the government's record on regional development poses the question: Why should we be voting for this government to borrow more money when it is not spending very well the last borrowings we gave it in the House a year or so ago?

Also, I want to comment on the fisheries aid package that was announced the other day. I wish the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans was here. I understand he is away on business and I am not criticizing him for that, but I do wish he were within the hearing of my voice at this time. I wanted to say to him, as I have said to him privately, that I believe the fish aid package will go some way to addressing some of the problems and easing some of the pain. I have no hesitation in saying that publicly, and I have already said it to him privately.

There are a couple of key issues that it does not address and he acknowledges at least one of these. Let me deal with that one first. It does not address the issue of the inshore fishermen, the so-called fixed gear fishermen. The Minister for International Trade in his re-