

*Speaker's Ruling*

I wish to thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for raising this issue and providing the Chairman with an opportunity to clarify our practice with regard to the royal recommendation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** Before resuming debate, I wish to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex—Agriculture; the hon. member for South West Nova—Fisheries; the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby—Women's Centres.

## MEASURE TO AMEND

**Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam):** Madam Speaker, before the debate on Bill C-69 adjourned on March 27, I was in the process of discussing the impact of the Expenditures Restraint Act. I suggest that after the minister's tabling today we should perhaps call it the "Consumers' Restraint Act".

When I was discussing Bill C-69 I discussed the fact that social assistance services cannot now meet the demands of low income Canadians and their families. We have witnessed a rise in the number of Canadian families forced to go to food banks. Forty per cent of all food bank users are children. Not your children, not my children, but Canadian children are forced regularly to the food banks for their very subsistence.

This government has done nothing to help low-income Canadians and has, in fact, abandoned its responsibility to ensure that social assistance programs are available to all of those in need.

When I last spoke, I spoke about the fact that welfare rates are not adequate in my home province of British Columbia. I also mentioned that, in my view, this is because the British Columbia government is strangling the welfare system and leaving a province that should have a normal economy in the enviable position of being a have province.

Indeed, just this week, the province brought down a budget which purported to be a balanced budget but, in fact, was another smoke and mirrors budgets which is so often the case in British Columbia.

On March 27 I read into the record statistics from a 1989 report from the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia. Those statistics outlined that the shortfall for welfare recipients in British Colum-

bia ranges from 83 per cent for a single male person to 44 per cent for a single mother with one child. One example is that a single mother with two teenaged children would find a shortfall of 66 per cent. She receives \$986 but needs \$1,633. That is a hypothetical example, but you could couple that with the housing crisis, not just in British Columbia but across the country.

Life for a social service recipient in any province in this country is extremely difficult. The Canada Assistance Plan represents the principle that regardless of where one lives in Canada, whether it is on Vancouver Island, the lower mainland, the prairie provinces, eastern Canada or northern Canada, one should be eligible to receive support payments that will meet the basic needs. In fact, the proposal under Bill C-69, the capping of the Canada Assistance Program in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, denies that basic philosophy and sends us down a different path for the future with regard to support for Canadians.

The ceiling on CAP expenditures is a transfer of responsibility from the federal to the provincial government. That will reduce the federal government's ability to ensure equal treatment in the delivery of social services. A cap on the Canada Assistance Plan means fewer and reduced services in those provinces in which the cap is applied.

A cap on the Canada Assistance Plan means less flexibility for the provinces in the delivery of service as no new moneys will be available. This measure could cut short Ontario's plan, for example, to redesign its social services. There will be fewer services at a time when cuts in the unemployment insurance program will force more people on to the welfare rolls. Less money will mean lower relative welfare rates and a greater reliance on food banks and other charitable sources.

Let us not forget the clawback on family allowance and old age pensions that has already been put forward by this government in Bill C-28.

• (1640)

This is the same kind of pulling away from a national commitment, in this case to seniors and again to mothers and children. Those who will bear the brunt of these measures are those who are already being squeezed by the provincial governments, particularly in Ontario by cuts to food banks, in Alberta by the Alberta budget of