

*Government Orders*

that we have in the province of Ontario. They want these national standards.

As the member for Hillsborough said, they want to make sure that this government is equipped to monitor and to maintain those standards in all provinces.

Does he not believe that the direction we are heading in is going to lead to us as national legislators to having a much more difficult time in meeting those national standards?

**Mr. Proud:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his comments and his question. What I have said here today and what I feel each time I rise in this House to speak on topics regarding budgetary matters, equalization payments, is that I am afraid we are headed in the direction that the country you and I grew up in is changing dramatically. I mentioned this in my speech. I am terrified that we are going to a more selfish type of government in which the rich are getting richer but the poor are not being looked after by the government the way that I knew it and that you knew it.

I see this happening and it is something that has happened over the last number of years. It makes me very sad to see this happening, not just because I come from one of the financially poorer parts of the country, but because Canadians—as you said, people in Ontario, people in Quebec, people in other parts of the country—believe that we should share this way, the way we have been sharing certainly for the last 50 years.

I am sure that if a poll were taken today it would show that. I would urge the government opposite not to go off on that route it seems to be taking, on which it is going to dismantle all of the things that I stand for and that I am sure many people in this House stand for.

**Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn):** Mr. Speaker, some might have believed the hype put out by the government on this bill which referred to it primarily as “housekeeping”. That is the way I took it at first. It seemed as though it was going to be a rather humdrum affair, that there really was not all that much to talk about. I was certainly drawn back to reality when the minister, giving his opening speech on the bill this morning, started bragging about all the transfer pay-

ments that had gone from the federal government to the provinces.

I am from Saskatchewan and when I see what has happened to the province of Saskatchewan, not only by the Conservative government in Ottawa over the last few years, but also the Conservative government in power in Saskatchewan over the last 10 years, I can tell you that it certainly got my attention when it was talking about all this money and implying thereby that somehow this had imposed prosperity, not only on Saskatchewan but by implication, from what the minister said, on the nation as well.

It does not take a lot of imagination, study or observation to realize that what the minister was really doing was sounding, in most unequivocal terms, the failure of the very system which he was purporting to uphold.

In Canada, which most of us would acknowledge is potentially one of the richest countries in the world, for the minister to be speaking on this bill and bragging about how the increases to the provinces had gone up many-fold over the last number of years is really an indication of the failure of the system. I say a failure of the system because I would suspect that had we not had a failure of the system then most likely the provinces and the regions would have received less money.

• (1750)

Less money because the system, the economic system we have in place in the country, the economic leadership provided by the federal government, would have led in truth to a prosperity in the regions. The opposite has been the case.

I know that there are times, certainly in our part of the country, when the economic situation is going to deteriorate somewhat. There are also instances in other parts of the country such as the fishery when you get a severely cold winter and the fish, in order to escape the more frigid waters, go elsewhere and are more difficult to catch. Therefore there is a failure in the fishery.

I do not want to leave the impression that I am not aware of what has happened under the aegis of this government. I am very well aware that along with all the government's other failed programs, its failure to sup-