

Government Orders

which usually means people who are on social assistance and welfare, "have psychiatric disorders compared to one in seven children in other homes. More than 40 per cent of children ages 12 to 16 in subsidized housing do more poorly in school than other children do". These are kids. This is our future we are talking about.

Think about it. What we are doing here is crippling. We are giving these children a handicap before they even understand what their role will be as young adults or as adults in society.

An hon. member: It is criminal.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): It is close to being criminal. My colleague from Broadview—Greenwood, who has expressed with a great deal of clarity time after time after time in this House the problems this government has in focusing, would agree with my comment.

Instead of penalizing those individuals and their children who are forced into poverty, we need a 100 per cent effort by the Parliament of Canada and by the people of Canada and a partnership with the businesses in Canada; not to put more welfare payments out there, not to kick those who are down, but to put people back to work. If we can make that effort, break that cycle of poverty and put integrity and self-respect back in the lingo of those who are pushed down so hard, then just maybe the government would not have to worry. Even with its mismanagement it might be able to handle its deficit.

If we put people back to work in this country, if we focus our efforts on re-instilling pride in the work people do and allowing them to dream about doing better, they will be able to look up and see a light at the end of the tunnel. Right now, every time they see a flicker of light, the government comes in with some damned piece of legislation like Bill C-32 which basically says, as has been said before: "If you are poor, tough luck. You people don't vote anyway. Don't you know that? Poor people don't vote". We have all heard that. I guess they are too busy trying to figure out how in the name of goodness they are going to pay their rent and put clothes on the backs of their children.

I thought perhaps the government could have come back from its Christmas holiday a little wiser and asked what Bill C-32 does. It caps the rate of increase on the government's contribution to social assistance programs in three provinces, the ones it considers to be the wealthiest provinces. Well, wake up and smell the coffee. Ontario is quickly becoming a have not province in this country.

As I said earlier, how in the name of God can we differentiate one poor family from another poor family? If you are poor in Newfoundland making \$10,000 a year, if you are poor in Willowdale making \$10,000 a year, or if you are poor in Vancouver, damn it, you are still poor. To differentiate and say for some reason that because you are in southern Ontario, British Columbia or Alberta, as these payments go up it is not going to participate like it did before. Leave it up to the provincial governments.

This is going to sound strange, coming from the mouth of an Atlantic Canadian, but I am going to tell you. In Atlantic Canada sometimes we are the butt of jokes and sometimes we make Ontario the butt of our jokes. But let's be serious here. The new NDP left-right coalition—the NDP government down in Queen's Park and the Tory government opposite—has done almost the impossible with the Ontario economy. It took an economy which was bubbling over two and a half years ago and not only put the brakes on it, but wrecked the vehicle. It has literally killed the Ontario economy.

The free enterprise spirit has been crushed in Ontario. The high interest rates of this federal government of two years ago, the GST which has completely destroyed consumer confidence, the free trade deal, and a government in Ontario that says "what is another \$10 billion in deficit", destroyed the main economy in Canada that allows our federal government to work, that allows us to have equalization programs and transfer payments. By the grace of God, for the last number of years Ontario has been the bread basket and the powerhouse economically in this country, and it has been.

It upsets me that it is being driven over. I do not know but I think the Prime Minister is in the driver's seat. Boy, I do not know if Bob Rae is pulling it over or pushing it over, but the Ontario economy is in deep trouble. For this government not to recognize that to put an addition-