

because it cuts away at the shelter that those with low incomes and fixed incomes need to protect them from inflation and to meet the day-to-day price increases which inflation represents.

My colleague, the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis), talked about the food depots which are being established in Kamloops. My colleague, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-St. James (Mr. Keeper), and I know about the tremendous increase which there has been in the last year in the services of institutions such as the Salvation Army, and in the members of the old, middle-aged and young people who are coming there every day to get food.

I am old enough to have lived through the period of the great depression of the 1930s—

An Hon. Member: You were very young.

Mr. Orlikow: I was very young at that time, that is true—and I remember the soup kitchens and the relief kitchens to which tens of thousands of unemployed had to go just to keep alive. From 1940 on, from the period when World War II started and we saw that full employment was not only possible but had been achieved, I, like thousands of other Canadians, came to the conclusion that we would never see those kinds of situations again. They are now back for us, and not only in Kamloops or Winnipeg; Vancouver, wealthy Calgary, Regina, Toronto, every city and, I suppose, every small town in Canada is experiencing the same situation. That is a disgrace. It is a disgrace that that kind of situation would be permitted to exist in a country as wealthy as Canada, a country with the resources that we have, a country with the well-trained, highly-educated young people that we have. Yet that is what is happening in Canada, and it will get worse because the Government has given up any principle or intention it ever had to see that the people of this country live under decent conditions.

The Government brings forward this Bill, which we say is the beginning of an attack on the whole system of social programs which has served Canada so well since 1945, in order to save \$115 million in 1983. This is based on the belief that this Government is determined to promote the idea that it is not a “big spender” in terms of social programs. This country is not one of the big spenders on social programs as compared to other countries. David Ross, in his book “The Working Poor” published in 1981, compared what Canada is doing in the way of social programs to other countries, and he makes the following statement:

Using 1974 data, Canada ranked thirteenth of seventeen OECD countries when expenditures on income maintenance were expressed as a percentage of Gross National Product.

Mr. Speaker, we are not and have never been among the big spenders. We have never been in the same class as countries such as West Germany, Holland, Belgium, Norway or Sweden. Yet this Government which, for reasons which I do not want to discuss today, implemented so many of the programs

we have—prodded by other Parties, by organizations such as the Canadian Labour Congress, and urged on by organizations such as the Canadian Council for Social Development—is now moving as quickly as it can to mobilize support, not for holding the line, not for improving the programs which we have, but for cutting back.

Once you start this process of cutting back, the Government and this Minister should know how many important, wealthy, influential individuals, how many big organizations such as the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, will be happy to join with her in helping to persuade the Canadian public that we need to cut back, that we cannot afford these things.

We do not accept this idea that we cannot afford these things. We believe that this country not only has to maintain the services which we have established over these many years, but that we have to improve the services, that we have to catch up to other countries which have done more for their people than we have.

The Family Allowances Program is the only Program we have that acknowledges the cost of parenting and recognizes the importance of children to Canadian society. It has been estimated that it takes \$500,000 or more to raise a child, counting out-of-pocket expenses, the extra hours of labour by the parents and the income that the mother could have earned if she had not interrupted her working career. In the end this huge investment benefits society in general rather than the individual parent.

In comparison to this huge expense the Family Allowance is a very small amount, and to reduce this amount even by a little bit is both illogical and unjust. A couple living in one of Canada's largest cities is poor if they have an income of under \$12,000. If they have a child, they require an additional \$4,000 income. Family Allowance supplies much less than \$400 per year, less than 10 per cent of this requirement. Yet a cut in this amount is precisely what this Minister is proposing in this legislation.

We are going to oppose this Bill, as we are going to oppose the other Bills which call for cutbacks and reductions. We are going to oppose them as we always have because we believe that the people of Canada are entitled to the kind of social programs which they have. We believe they need much more than they are getting. This is not the place, nor do I want to take the time of the House, to say to the Minister and the Government that there are dozens if not hundreds of ways in which, if the Government really believes that it needs to save the kind of money that it will save with this program, it could save it with much less harm to ordinary Canadians.

Let me just mention a couple of ways. Let me remind the Minister that her colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), in a budget proposal last year reduced the marginal rate of income tax to be paid by those in the highest income