

year alone, and \$618 million a year by the end of the three-year phase-in period.

The Mulroney government has cut back on EPF transfers, as I have already mentioned. In fact, the cumulative effect of the cut in transfer payments to provincial governments for health, social services, and education—the kinds of programs needed to provide support to working poor families—represent a cut of \$31 billion for medicare and post-secondary education. Approximately \$22 billion of this will be taken out of the heart of medicare.

• (1550)

In 1990, the Mulroney government announced a plan to cut transfers in CAP to Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta, claiming these provinces were too wealthy. This cut represents \$75 million in 1990 and \$80 million in 1991–1992.

The Mulroney government has also cut its proposal to spend \$4 billion on increasing the number of child care spaces. That, combined with the fact that the government spending under CAP amounts to \$2.6 billion, means that the government's savings of \$200 million annually again is being carried out on the backs of working and working-poor families.

We have heard time and again in the House how Bill C-21 is going to do so much for the working poor. Well, we are getting the tally. In municipalities across the country as a result of Bill C-21 the welfare rolls are rising. Bill C-21 was not a measure to create jobs or to assist those thousands of workers who have gotten their walking papers over the last number of months as a result of the government's monetary and fiscal policies. In fact, Bill C-21 will see a \$1.3 billion annual cut in benefits to the unemployed. These are real people who are lacking hope and the federal government's \$1.3 billion cut is going to reach deeper into the pockets of those families who now currently cannot afford to support themselves.

The main impediments to families being caught in the cycle of poverty are the issues of food and housing. Can you believe, Mr. Speaker, that in 1989 the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney actually spent less on housing across the country than was spent in 1984? At a time when housing costs across the country are sky-rocketing and when the number of homeless has reached into

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the tens of thousands of homeless families across the country, the Mulroney government is spending less in real dollars in 1989 than it spent in 1984.

For the benefit of those on the other side of the House, I would like to table a copy of a list all of the cuts that have hit poor and working-poor families since 1984. Those cuts total over \$20 billion, excluding the specific amounts relating to EPF transfers. That is \$20 billion taken from the hands—in fact, from the mouths—of the children of Canada.

One of the reasons we wanted to launch this debate was not only so that we could wake up Canadians to the fact that we have a country which has an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. We do not have to go to the papers to see the evidence of it. We can go into our own constituencies and to the food banks. Only last month in the city of Montreal there was a line-up down the street of people trying to get second-hand clothing because they did not have enough money to clothe themselves. The federal government's response to the situation of families in real need is to cut, cut, cut to the bare bones.

Let us look for example at a very specific area. I was frankly shocked to hear the Minister of Labour in the House today, in response to my colleague from Winnipeg, claim that he was not immediately moving to increase the minimum wage because only a small percentage of Canadians would benefit from it. Mr. Speaker, the percentage may be small but I think the federal government and the Minister of Labour should hang their heads in shame that the federal government has the lowest minimum wage of any government in Canada. My colleague pointed out the fact that a single woman supporting a child would have to work 87 hours a week at the minimum wage merely to reach the established level of poverty. Frankly, you see the real need in provinces such as Newfoundland which has a higher minimum wage than the federal government. After I have tabled the analysis of the cuts of federal spending, I would like to take some time to read into the record.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. member have permission to table the document? There has to be unanimous consent in order to have it tabled. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.