

Supply

whether they are speeding limits or whatever, we would not need to have them.

I agree with the hon. member, it is a frustrating thing, especially when there are people who need help desperately, deserve help, and because of some rule or some regulation that government has brought in for whatever reason, we cannot help those individuals.

He talked about jobs, whether they are good jobs, meaningful jobs and so on, and 80 per cent of the jobs that have been created over the last five years have been full-time jobs. A good proportion of those have been very good jobs, long lasting jobs and so on. We are into a recession now and some people will be laid off within the work force, but of the jobs that have been created, they have been full-time, and that has been a change from the previous period. I want to comment on one final thing and ask if the hon. member had heard of it. It is time that we took a look at changing the methods of providing assistance to people. For example, in my region of Peel, the Social Affairs Department has provided a program for single parents, primarily women, who have found themselves all of a sudden without a spouse for support and with no training. They have not been in the work force for years, if ever, and find themselves on family allowance. The Social Affairs Department have a program where they give these women basic training and send them for job interviews. The department helps with finding a job. If they do get a job, the regional Peel social services pay for three-quarters of the day care. They pay for three weeks out of the four weeks for the day care which makes it better for these people to accept the job. That is what the member was talking about, that they had to make the decision of whether to get a job or to stay on social assistance.

Is the member aware of this program, and if so, would he not think that that is the type of program that they should be involved in more and more because the delivery of social services comes at the local level where people understand the problems probably a lot better than we do?

Mr. Breagh: Mr. Speaker, in the province of Ontario, as one example, and I am aware that other provinces have done the same thing, the social assistance review

committee studied all the forms of social assistance and pointed out a number of barriers to people actually breaking out of the poverty trap. A number of our municipalities have tried to provide more flexibility. The new government in Ontario is certainly aware of the cost of that and is also aware that there is great potential there.

I would make this comment, too. One of the real problems in Canada is that the structure of government is such that the level of government that comes up with this brilliant notion initially very often has nothing to do with the delivery of the service. Social assistance is one of these things. Some bright idea that someone in Ottawa thought about 30 years ago is being handled by someone in Burlington this week. The two may never have communicated and when the person in Burlington, Oshawa, or wherever, says that this is a stupid system and you have to change some of the rules, it only takes two or three decades to transmit that message because it has to go through so many levels of government.

One of the things the Thompson report talked about, and it is blatant common sense, is to try to identify the purpose of this exercise. It is not to put someone on a program for life. It is to get someone out of poverty. That is the name of the game. If there are things that must be done that hurt someone's feelings because the bureaucracy has to move around a little bit, then the bureaucracy should move around to try to identify what it is that a single mother needs to get her back into the workforce.

I bet all of the members here have done exactly what I have done. We have participated in setting up unemployment help centres, counselling and referral centres. We have all talked to people in the social service agencies who know that their system has some problems in it, who would very dearly like to bend some of those rules, and sometimes do.

The Thompson report in Ontario is one major step in trying to put some common sense into a very complicated system. In many centres it is beginning to work. The new government, I know, is very supportive of that and wants to extend it around the province. I think that needs to be done on a very broad scale all across Canada.