

Government Orders

changes because this will happen or the sky will fall down" is totally inappropriate.

Those in need, the poorest of the poor, need us to make changes so they can more properly take their place in the work place. One of the previous speakers from the governing party mentioned literacy for example. There is a 38 per cent illiteracy rate in Canada. Almost four out of ten Canadians experience some serious degree of illiteracy where they have difficulty functioning in number or language skills.

This is part of what we are talking about in dealing with a redeployment of human resources. To say that we are doing this on the backs of the needy is churlish in my view. It is complaining for the sake of complaint. Let us get on with the job. Let us recognize and acknowledge that what we have done, as my hon. colleague said, for 20 or 30 years is not acceptable anymore.

Times have changed. The world is changing. We do not want huge sectors of our society being left behind as we move into the next century. If we care about our fellow Canadians, we must gather them up and move together. If we do not take action now and improve our safety net programs, we will leave those folks behind. That would be a tragedy of epic proportions. We have to take action.

I suggest the options that have been placed before Canadians are the right place to start.

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address the government's proposed social policy review today. I have been pleased to take the charge the government has suggested to participate in fostering informed public debate by taking up the debate in my constituency in the last several weeks.

Today I would like to spend the majority of my time on the issue of the family as it relates to child care. First let me echo the surprise and concern of some of my constituents as I talked to them in the past while.

First, when the whole social security program was presented, including old age security, the CPP and federal government transfers to provinces for established programs and equalization, the people in my community were convinced that surely we cannot avoid reducing expenditures in social program areas, as this represents a very major portion of government expenditures.

In fact at present rates of growth in these very programs, social program expenditure and debt service charges alone will exceed our total revenue in government within just a few years. Cuts must be made. However, they feel that taxes must not be increased, specifically as relates to our CAP. They were shocked to hear that the federal government forbids a work component in any welfare assistance.

There were a few things they were shocked about. They were shocked to hear of the unsecured liability of over \$500 billion,

as great as the federal debt, in the CPP program alone. They were angry at a government that would possibly consider taxation of RRSPs when its own security programs for seniors, including the old age security program, are becoming totally unsustainable.

Changes must be made to provide a social security system that addresses the real needs now and for the future of our citizens.

• (1745)

As we speak of the future, I would like to spend the majority of my allotted time on the foundation for that future. The Reform Party believes in the importance of strengthening and protecting the family unit as essential to the well-being of individuals in society.

The family, I believe, is the fundamental building block of our society. Not only is it the best institution for the transfer and protection of values, of culture and of social stability, it is the very best institution for the practical realization of our social policy renewal.

I stand distinct in this House today in the fact that my background has basically been one of a homemaker. I have heard in this House people complain about different programs that government proposes or that are actually in existence that make one spouse dependent on another.

I am not sure that is always a bad idea. A dependency in our social structure between people especially if those people can create a unit that will indeed strengthen the base of society is not a bad thing. There is strength in numbers. There is strength in combination of talents. There is strength in bringing viewpoints together.

Our society must be built on values such as commitment and understanding, shared goals and willingness to sacrifice. These things are epitomized in our families and they should be honoured in that situation.

Recently while attending the Standing Committee on Justice concerning changes to the Young Offenders Act I was not at all surprised to hear a witness remark that he felt that government legislation had worked against families.

I see it often in my constituency office in stories from distraught parents as to how those provincial and federal laws, their programs and their bureaucracy have affected their children, their ability to make a living and even their hope for their future.

Short term planning and ever escalating government programs have removed authority from parents. They have skewed their responsibilities in all directions and even hinted that perhaps they should not even work together in the home, it is better to work outside the home, and then they diverted their energies from their families into basic economic survival.

With the social policy review, once again the government proposes new and bigger programs that will adversely affect