

Government Orders

sorry your parents cannot find jobs but it is a 'necessary restructuring'."

Somehow I do not think these kids will find that a very convincing explanation. Neither do I.

I would like to point out the devastating impact that this bill will have on thousands of disabled people throughout this country. Government members like to point with pride to the amendments to Bill C-18 and say: "Look, we are giving disabled persons \$65 million". However, these are the same members who are voting in favour of Bill C-32 which will remove more than \$2 billion from Canada Assistance Plan payments. These government members voted for legislation that will cut home care for disabled persons, that will cut health care for disabled persons, that will cut rehabilitation programs for disabled persons, that will cut funding for residences for disabled persons and will cut employment services for disabled persons.

I would hope that the members opposite would recognize that many disabled persons in this country live in poverty and are going to be seriously hurt by this bill.

Government members also point to the Prime Minister's announcement in Winnipeg of \$31 million a year in programs for the disabled. These same members seem to forget that more than a year ago they voted for Bill C-69 which slashed social program funding by billions of dollars and slashed Established Programs Financing by billions of dollars. These same members seem to forget that they voted to cut the jobs strategy fund by \$100 million and voted to cut social housing by \$411 million. They seem to forget that they voted to reduce cash transfers to the provinces for medicare.

This government has cut social programs by billions upon billions of dollars. These programs are the very ones which disabled persons rely on to help them obtain proper accommodation, help them get out of poverty and help them live in a maximum degree of dignity and freedom.

The government has undermined all the major programs which disabled Canadians need in order to succeed. I have to wonder how these government members can sleep at night, knowing what they have inflicted

on these people who are among the most vulnerable in our country.

In the last budget speech the Minister of Finance had the nerve to say: "This government has done more than any other to improve the opportunities and to enable Canadians with disabilities to participate more fully and more fairly in the workplace in their communities and at home".

Contrast those words of the minister with the words used by the Canadian Cerebral Palsy Association when commenting on this legislation to cap the CAP: "The extraordinary suffering which it imposes on poor and disabled Canadians cannot be justified".

That is what disabled Canadians think of this legislation. The suffering which it imposes cannot be justified. That is what most of us think of this legislation. It cannot be justified.

I cannot support this bill. My party will not support this bill. Most Canadians will not support this bill.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, it seems that most occasions when we rise in the House of Commons these days, we have to qualify whether or not it is a privilege to be getting up and speaking. I certainly have to put that qualification on my remarks today because of the subject matter.

The whole situation in the country has been so devastating that to be talking about putting any kinds of restrictions on the amount of assistance which Canadians get from their federal government in a program which is as long established as this is absolutely unconscionable.

I guess there are three questions we would ask ourselves on three particular areas at least. The first is why is this happening? Why is the federal government doing this? I think in the first case we would ask this question because of its philosophical antipathy toward the very people who receive the assistance from the Canada Assistance Plan.

The government has this image of people on welfare. Certainly the Canada Assistance Plan is designed to assist most people who are on welfare. It has this image in its mind of young, strapping, well-muscled people who are simply too lazy to work. That being the case, they