

*Government Orders*

When the federal government cuts back on CAP, as it is doing with the bill before us this afternoon, it places great financial pressure on the affected provinces at a time when most provinces are trying to practise fiscal restraint.

As I stated earlier, the Canada Assistance Plan is essential in my province of Prince Edward Island. I know that this legislation today does not affect the Atlantic area now but my concern is for the future. By passing this legislation—as I said, the government has a majority so no doubt it will pass—this government will demonstrate once again that it is willing to implement its fiscal policies on the backs of the disadvantaged.

**Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-32, an act to amend the Canada Assistance Plan, if passed will put a cap on the Canada Assistance Plan transfers to Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario.

This government believes that these three provinces do not need federal equalization payments, but this government does not tell the public that over 50 per cent of all welfare recipients under the CAP shared programs live in these three provinces. Ontario alone will lose about \$1 billion this year because of the cap on the Canada Assistance Plan.

What happens when the transfer payments are reduced or cut? People suffer. This government says that Ontario is a have province. What does that mean? What do we have in this have province of Ontario?

We have raging unemployment. That is what we have in Ontario. We have massive numbers of plant closures, such as the plant closure in Swansea in my riding. We have people who have been employed all their adult lives who find that their unemployment benefits have run out and they still have no job. These are people in their mid-fifties. Some, who are 60, have to work because their companies have not provided adequate pensions for their retirement.

What do these people do? They go on welfare. It is either that or beg for food from food banks. How humiliating. How depressing. Two years ago, there were 36,000 welfare cases in metro Toronto. Last year, that figure jumped to 50,000 and this year there are almost 88,000 cases. This is what we have in a have province.

Recently, a Liberal task force held hearings across Ontario, including the major cities and small villages. I joined the task force when it held hearings in metropolitan Toronto. We heard presentations by Mr. Alan Tonks, chairman of the Metropolitan Toronto Corporation. We

heard a brief by Mayor Art Eggleton of the city of Toronto. These two gentlemen alone represent and serve over two million people. They serve more than many premiers serve. People do not realize that some of these cities have populations larger than many entire provinces. These two gentlemen are responsible for providing services to and caring for over two million people. Both of these gentlemen said, and I will never forget it, that the federal government has abandoned the big cities.

We heard in Question Period about how Montreal has been abandoned and about the economic woes of that city. The government has abandoned Windsor. We have been hearing about the prices and the unemployment there. It has abandoned Hamilton and the city of Toronto.

Here are some more startling statistics. There are 130,000 people in metropolitan Toronto who are currently collecting unemployment insurance benefits. Can this government give me assurances that when its claims are exhausted they will get jobs? I think not. They are going to go on social assistance. Does the Prime Minister still think that Ontario is a have province? Does he think that B.C. and Alberta are have provinces?

I recently asked my constituents some questions in a survey sent to every household in my riding. In the comments section my constituents said over and over again that every Canadian should be equal and that every province should be equal. They know that Bill C-69 was wrong. They know that this bill, Bill C-32, is wrong. This government is not treating all Canadians equally when the provinces are divided into have and have not provinces.

When one is very ill one should have equal access to hospital care. Where is the principle of universality that we cherished in this country for so long? It is the backbone of fairness in Canada, and this government is blatantly ignoring that fact.

Metro Toronto hired 350 new case workers for welfare last year and has been forced to hire 250 more this year. One of my constituents came to me recently and asked for a letter of reference from me. I have known him for about 15 years now and he had a very successful photography business. He came to me and said: "Mr. Flis, I have had to sell off all of my equipment and I need a letter of reference". I said: "You need a letter of reference to go on welfare?" "No", he said, "I want to work for welfare". The number of welfare offices and personnel is growing by leaps and bounds to serve these 88,000 welfare cases. I complimented him because rather