

*Government Orders*

to get by on one income were among those hurt the most. Those are the people who form the backbone of family life. When you are trying to deal with the support systems for children and trying to deal with child poverty, these are the families we should be trying to shore up and not destroy.

As a whole, the 1980s marked an end, at least temporarily, to huge decade-by-decade jumps in family standards of living. In other words, the government's own agency now reveals that the Liberal strategy from the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and the 1970s was a strategy that produced a support system for families and increased the wealth of Canadians. Even during the Depression and again during the Second World War we managed to better protect Canadians than during the tremendous economic growth of the 1980s.

Just think how miserable this government would have been if it had had a recession for the last seven years; it would not have known how to cope. It does not know how to create wealth. It does not know how to create jobs. As a result, all it can do is use its budget to come down with Draconian measures such as Bill C-20, Bill C-32 and previously Bill C-69.

Canadians from coast to coast are arguing and are presenting briefs to this government saying: "Back off, we have had enough, we can't withstand this any further". All this government can do is indicate through every signal, in the speech by the Minister of Finance and in the speech we just heard in the House of Commons a few minutes ago, that this path will be continued. It is as if the complaints on individual levels to individual members of Parliament and complaints made across the country though briefs to this government are just put aside and not heard at all.

In responding to this report on child poverty by Statistics Canada, the *Toronto Star* in its editorial castigated the Minister of Finance who had responded in the pat fashion he has that he cannot do anything about it. I quote: "What he is really saying is that Canada, one of the world's richest countries, cannot help its poor, sick and jobless". Stop and think about what that means for Canadians. We have always put ourselves in the G-7. We have always argued that we have one of the most productive economies, that we have been able to generate tremendous wealth. Yet, when it comes down to the basic question of maintaining a society that is liveable for

all people, we are now saying that we cannot do it any more.

• (1230)

Canadians hear these speeches in which somehow or other the implication is that you should feel guilty that you have spent all your money and that you should not be asking us for any more. Canadians have not spent all this money. Since 1984, the federal government has spent all this money. It has blown the opportunity. It should step aside and let Canadians with a more responsible idea of society take over and show other people exactly how to rebuild Canada. The sooner this happens, the better. As I say, Mr. Speaker, that is about the only question I am asked when I am back home in Winnipeg.

Another article that appeared in the media during the period of time since we last met was headlined "What future for kids in poverty's grasp?" It also repeated the figure that the number of poor children increased 15 per cent from 1989 to 1990 and that they now number more than one million. Think of it, a 15 per cent increase in child poverty in one year.

In 1990, two-thirds of children in single mother families were poor, making up nearly 40 per cent of the total number of poor kids. Ontario's welfare bill is now \$5.45 billion.

Here are some other stats. Girls whose families are on welfare have 3.9 times the rate of poor school performance than other girls. Boys on welfare are 1.4 times more likely to do worse than other boys. Almost one-third of children in subsidized housing have psychiatric disorders compared to one in seven children in other homes. More than 40 per cent of children 12 to 16 in subsidized housing do poorly in school. However, children on social assistance who do not live in subsidized housing do even worse.

Child poverty rates are directly tied to adult jobless rates. There is a broad consensus around the need for better job training programs, agreements on pay equity for women and higher minimum wages. The point is that it requires a strategy.

We on this side of the House have spent the last year thinking about these issues and working with Canadians to develop a strategy. We believe very strongly that this government's strategy is incorrect and that what we need to do is again unite the two principal purposes we have for the federal government in this country; that is