

Government Orders

This is a program whose beneficiaries probably in most cases could not even identify it, but they are people who have received in the 1991-92 fiscal year \$6.4 billion. This is a measure in which federal and provincial governments share equally the cost of basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, utilities and household supplies. This is a measure under which the federal government in the last election campaign promised to deliver day care.

An hon. member: We cannot afford it.

Mr. Kaplan: Why did you not say so in the election campaign? The hon. member is saying the government cannot afford it. It says that now, now that it has another two years left in its mandate. During the election campaign what it said, as we and as the NDP did too, was that day care was the missing program under the Canada Assistance Plan and that it would introduce it if it were elected.

We were not elected. We can be excused.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kaplan: I see I have only two minutes left. What I would like to know from the parliamentary secretary is this: How can that party now complain about being at 8 per cent popularity in the city of Toronto or at 16 per cent nationally when it had the nerve in the last election campaign to promise day care and it says now it does not have the money?

Was it not smart enough with the Minister of Finance that it had during the last Parliament—after it had doubled the deficit—to know that maybe this promise should not have been made?

This government is on a very sticky wicket to try and defend this measure on the basis of financial need when it has created the financial need by the way in which it has run the country since 1984.

[*Translation*]

If they had solutions to reduce the deficit and were committed to reduce the deficit in 1984, why did they not act on their promise when they took power in 1984?

Mr. Speaker, in the city of Toronto—

[*English*]

In the city of Toronto the government still has eight points left to go. Nationally, it still has 16 points left to

go. If it continues to make this kind of defence of its programs, it will not be very long in going through that 16 per cent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, it is really a shame that there has to be a debate at all on Bill C-32. It is yet another vicious cut brought upon the poorest of the poor of this country by this government. I have here a list of programs provided under the Canada Assistance Plan and I want all the members of this House to know what these programs are because it is important that they know what this government is proposing to cut in this bill. There are programs dealing with children in foster homes who need protection, with physically or mentally disabled people, with single-parent families, with seniors, with the unemployed, with families and individuals in need, with low-income earners and with battered women.

That is the list I found in the Canada Assistance Plan annual report.

The government is proposing cuts in the payments to assist these people. Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this bill is flawed. This House should reject it.

We also have a quote from Mrs. Anne McGrath, the Vice-President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, who stated the following before the Finance Committee during the study of Bill C-69. The source is the May 15, 1990 proceedings of the Committee, on page 121:5. She said: "Why is CAP important to women? I think we want to say that programs supported by the Canada Assistance Plan essentially present our most basic public commitment—this government's and this country's most basic public commitment—to women's equality. We view any threat to those programs as a reduction in this commitment."

As well, any reduction in this commitment and the reduction we are talking about in Bill C-69, we believe, puts at risk the real lives of poor and working women who are the primary beneficiaries of the programming that is eligible for funding under the Canada Assistance Plan.