

Canadian Economy

Again, on the subject of native and rural housing, I draw attention to the fact that the cost of land in rural areas is much lower than it is in the cities, and that consequently dollars spent on housing will go a lot further, bearing in mind that it costs a minimum of \$20,000 for a lot in Toronto, Vancouver, or possibly in Ottawa at the present time.

Another thing the provinces have requested in the housing field: is that they be given prior notice of the housing projects the minister is dreaming up, instead of having to read about them in that Liberal clarion paper, the *Globe and Mail*. The provinces would like to know about these things in advance. There is something else the provincial governments want. They would like commitments from the federal government over, say, three years in advance so that they could plan ahead with assurance, and not be obliged to go cap in hand to Ottawa. I trust the minister will do what he said he would do in committee and give the provinces a three-year forecast.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order. In accordance with the order agreed to earlier, the hon. member's time has expired.

Miss Coline Campbell (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to speak on this opposition day. In particular I should like to direct my words to the motion of the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) on how the government is coping, and I quote from the words of the hon. member, with "the scourge of poverty". My own experience has dealt with one federal policy which is put forward for people with lower incomes, and that comes from legal aid experience. Tonight I should like to direct my words in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

I should like to take all the members here tonight back to April, 1973, when the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) tabled the working paper on social security in Canada. Our government has always maintained that the best security for the individual is a good job. There is no need to go into this at this time, but the many programs developed by the Department of Manpower and Immigration such as LIP, LEAP, OFY, as well as other working programs under DREE, all show the concern of the government for keeping the individual in the work force.

In the working paper there were five principal strategies. These were an employment strategy, a social insurance strategy, an incomes supplementation strategy, a social services strategy and a federal-provincial strategy. Substantial progress has been made since April, 1973, toward the realization of these strategies.

On the first strategy federal-provincial ministers have agreed that a community employment strategy is needed. To this end 20 developmental projects have been launched across Canada by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) and provincial ministers. This developmental work can only increase the experience of the government in finding and developing employment for people.

[Mr. Darling.]

● (2130)

The object of the social insurance strategy was to enable all Canadians to make provision for their retirement through social insurance plans and to insure themselves against temporary losses of income due to sickness, accident, unemployment or maternity. The Canada and Quebec pension plans have been amended so as to increase maximum monthly retirement pensions, from \$90 in December, 1973, to something like \$250 in January, 1980. These changes were made in the context of the increase in old age security pensions in 1972 from \$80 to \$100, and the full indexation of both pensions as announced in 1973. Taken together these measures mean that total maximum old age pensions in 1975 amount to about \$241 a month for a single person and \$361 for a couple both over 65 in receipt of one Canada pension.

The object of the income supplementation strategy was to ensure adequate incomes for people who are working but whose incomes are not sufficient to meet family needs, and equally for people who are retired or unable to work or find employment. This objective is being accomplished for people 65 years of age and over by the increases in OAS as well as in the Canada pension plan and Quebec pension plan pensions, as I have already mentioned. Since October, 1973, the old age security pension for a single person has been increased from \$100 to approximately \$123.42 this April. This is probably one of the largest increases ever made over such a short period of time.

Another part of the government's income supplementation strategy is the guaranteed annual income supplement. With the cost of living indexation, as of April 1, 1975, a single person could receive a maximum old age security pension and guaranteed income supplement of \$209.99 a month and a couple would receive \$400.60.

As for the social services strategy, this was designed to ensure that over a period of time social services would be available to enable people to achieve their full potential. Services such as rehabilitation, vocational training, day care and home maker assistance are often required to enable people to enter or to retain useful employment, or sometimes simply to assist them to realize fuller potential as citizens.

One major national measure that was of help to a lot of working adults with families was the introduction of day care centres in 1974. The spouses of these families were able to use day care centres on the basis of need.

The fifth strategy, the federal-provincial strategy, was designed to ensure the harmonization of federal and provincial social security systems, while providing to the provinces the flexibility they required in order to adapt such systems to the needs of their citizens. For example, under the new Family Allowances Act provinces can vary the federal family allowance payment according to age or the number of children in the family. These variations were subject to a national minimum and a national average per child paid in each province.

The social policy review has progressed to the stage where it was agreed at the February, 1975, meeting of federal and provincial ministers of welfare that a policy framework for the next stages in the reform of Canada's social security system be set up. This framework would