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NEW HORIZONS FOR ELDERLY CANADIANS

The Federal Government will provide funds for a new program to enable elderly people "to remain active in the mainstream of Canadian life". At a news conference last month, National Health and Welfare Minister John Munro outlined the plan, called "New Horizons", stating that it would help so-called "senior citizens" to "define and develop their interests in consultation with others who are retired from the labour force".

From 1951 to 1972, Mr. Munro said, the number of people 65 years of age and over had increased from 6.12 to 7 per cent of the total population, an increase of about 690,000, almost 90 per cent of whom were retired.

Excerpts from the Minister's statement follow:

* * * *

Many older people, upon leaving the labour force, are cut off from the mainstream of community activity. They are often isolated in a milieu which no longer allows for the full utilization of their knowledge and skills. With increasing frequency, the retired are expressing a desire to remain fully involved in community life. Like so many other Canadians, they seek opportunities to participate in activities which

will utilize their experience, both for their own betterment and that of the society as a whole.

AIMS OF HORIZONS PLAN

The New Horizons program is designed to substantially improve the quality of life for the retired in our country. Through participation in self-help and other community activities, the barriers that cause social isolation and feelings of loneliness among those Canadians over 65 will begin to be removed.

Projects could range from self-help and service-oriented programs to activities of a cultural nature. The senior citizens themselves will formulate and plan activities which are in accordance with their interests. To cite illustrations, physical fitness and travel-aid projects may be created for the specific benefit of the retired themselves, while programs such as a foster-grandparents plan and a counselling service for first offenders might be implemented for the benefit of other groups.

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As older Canadians gather together to undertake projects, they will have the chance to discuss with one another their role within the fabric of Canadian society. Therefore, they will be able to articulate their concern and the "voice" of senior citizens will be heard by all Canadians.

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NATURE OF PROGRAM

Basically, the New Horizons program will provide funds to groups of retired Canadians to carry out projects which reflect their design and desires.

More specifically:

Projects must be designed and developed by a group - normally at least ten - of retired persons. Projects submitted by individuals will not be considered for support.

Projects must be developed by retired Canadians. However, they need not be developed only for retired Canadians. Our hope is that many projects will be

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