inequities, but we seem to have provided in a reasonable way for the bulk of the needs of our people. Let us not lightly dismantle the structure we have built up until we are sure that it could be replaced by a better one.

With these few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will close. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this matter.

Mr. Hubert Badanai (Fort William): Mr. Speaker, the proposal contained in the resolution is such that every member would like to support it but it does not seriously take into account the cost of such a program. As an example, the estimated expenditures of the Department of National Health and Welfare which this parliament approved for the year 1967-68, amounted to $2.8 billion, including payments from the statutory Old Age Security Fund. This year the amount is considerably more, as was pointed out this afternoon by the minister.

This expenditure amounts to 26 per cent of the total federal government expenditures forcast for the same year and reflects the continued concern with the health and welfare of the people of Canada. In the past six years, the department has been assigned responsibility for such major programs as the Canada Pension Plan, the Canada Assistance Plan, the guaranteed income supplement, youth allowances, the health resources fund and medicare. These plans have all been designed to ensure Canadians the highest standards of health and ensure when, through age, infirmity or some other limitation, they can no longer work, they will receive a true measure of protection.

This afternoon the minister quoted figures of anticipated expenditures for welfare programs for 1969-70 which run into more than $3 billion. The guaranteed income supplement, designed to assist elderly persons with little or no income other than old age security payments, was introduced in January, 1967. The guaranteed income supplement provided up to $30 monthly to eligible recipients, increasing to $30.60 effective January, 1968. As of October, 1967 guaranteed income supplement payments had been made to 711,277 old age security recipients. Approximately 57 per cent of persons covered by the old age security program is also receiving guaranteed income supplement payments. The supplement program cost approximately $225 million in the calendar year 1967.

• (9:20 p.m.)

As of January, 1967, citizens age 68 years or over qualified for the old age security pension. This year persons age 66 and over will qualify and by January 1 of next year everyone who has reached age 65 will be eligible for old age security. Complementing our social insurance programs is the Canada Assistance Plan, under which agreements were signed with all the provinces in 1967. The significance of this plan lies in the fact that it provides for an integration into one over-all measure of the various assistance programs such as the old age assistance, blind persons allowances, disabled persons allowances and unemployment assistance. By extending for the first time federal sharing of costs in additional areas such as mothers allowances, child welfare and health and welfare services, the plan also gives emphasis to prevention and rehabilitation and thus to the reduction of assistance case loads.

A few moments ago the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Dubé) gave us a report concerning veterans pensions and other benefits payable to veterans. Therefore, I shall not repeat those facts which apply to the veterans. In 1967, the first guaranteed income supplement benefits were paid and about 57 per cent of old age security pensioners qualified for full or partial supplements. Also in 1967, the first Canada Pension Plan retirement pensions were paid and 68 year olds became eligible to draw old age security, Canada Pension Plan and guaranteed income supplement benefits.

It can hardly be said that we have not had our aged citizens very much in mind over the past six years. I must point out, however, that all these things cost money. In 1962-63 public expenditures on health and public welfare were made to the tune of some $3.9 billion. This amount increased to $6.5 billion in 1967-68. There was an increase in one year alone of over $1 billion. These are large figures. They represent an increase from 9.5 per cent of the gross national product in 1962-63 to 10.4 per cent in 1967-68.

Old age security expenditures were a major item in these figures. In 1962-63 there were 950,000 pensioners who received $734 million. Five years later, there were 1,366,000 pensioners who received a total benefit or $120.50 a month, including the old age security pension of $78. By 1976, the Canada Pension Plan will be paying $125 a month if escalation continues at 2 per cent a year and, together with