

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** I thank the hon. member for his question. I must say that indeed this matter has top priority in present discussions on the revision of social welfare legislation in Canada. We hope the work will be completed for the month of April next year.

[English]

**Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Can the minister advise the House if the government, in consultation with the provinces, will give consideration to raising the national minimum allowance for the blind as well as the disabled? This has not been raised for years.

[Translation]

**Mr. Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, the work being done with the provinces at this time concerns all those in need. We are endeavouring to do away, as much as possible, with the categories known in the past in the field of social welfare, and to introduce a guaranteed income and an income supplement program to be applied as widely as possible without encumbering ourselves with those artificial divisions that created so many problems in the past.

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[English]

#### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

##### ALLEGED DENIAL OF JUSTICE TO MR. SAMSON— GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, when the liberty of the subject is in any way interfered with, parliament has a pre-eminent duty to act. I want to ask first, why Robert Samson, a mounted police officer who has now been held for 74 or 75 days one way or another in custody, has not been charged if there is any evidence against him?

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, the matter on which Mr. Samson was held and brought before the fire commissioner's inquiry in Quebec was the responsibility of the Attorney General of Quebec and the investigating police force which is the Montreal Urban Community Police Force. The Attorney General of Quebec and the Montreal Urban Community Police Force decided to proceed in that way. We have no responsibility or jurisdiction in the matter. I might say that on other grounds the RCMP dismissed Mr. Samson from the force. He had a delay in which to appeal his dismissal but he did not take advantage of that delay.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, does not the minister know that he, as minister, and the government of Canada, should assure that a member of the force, as Mr. Samson was when these proceedings began, shall be protected from what is now apparently a perversion of justice. This has arisen in his being made to give evidence under the Fire Protection Act. This course, incidentally, is followed in other provinces but the accused has the right to ask for protection in respect of anything he says. Have the Mounted Police protested against this conduct which places a

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fellow Canadian in an impossible position and which is detrimental to the discipline and morale of the Mounted Police.

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, I have personally discussed this question with the Attorney General of Quebec and this question comes completely within his jurisdiction. The RCMP is put in a difficult position when a member of the force is suspected of committing an offence. If it takes measures which seem to protect the man, it can be accused of trying unduly to protect a member of the force. On the other hand if it does not, it is open to the sort of criticism which has been raised here today. The matter was completely within the jurisdiction of the Attorney General of Quebec. I discussed the matter with him and he said that he had decided to proceed in this way. That was his response to me. He told me that proceedings will take place in the weeks to come which will justify his action. I will wait to see what is to happen, but he has taken that position.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, does the minister approve of the kind of drum-head procedure that has been followed to the detriment of justice and the ordinary dignity of an individual.

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to comment on this case now because it is still before the Fire Commissioner and will proceed before the courts. But I have made my views known personally to the Attorney General of Quebec.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Tell us what they are.

**Mr. Allmand:** I will make further views known on the subject once the case before the courts has been concluded.

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#### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

##### WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE IN ROME—CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO FOOD SUPPLY PROBLEM— ASSURANCE DELEGATION LED BY MINISTER

**Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. It arises from his earlier reference to the world food conference in Rome, in March. As the World Food Conference to be held in Rome this November will be the first such conference held at a political and ministerial level specifically so that its recommendations will reflect the policies of the governments concerned, can the Prime Minister assure this House that Canada will be prepared to give the kind of creative support to third world initiatives for long-term rather than emergency solutions which we so badly failed to give at the World Congress on Population in Bucharest. Can he also assure the House that, this time, the Canadian delegation will be led by a minister throughout the proceedings.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the composition of the delegation and its terms of reference will be made public and the delegation will be led by a minister.