

*The Budget—Mr. Buchanan*

We are not rewarding our senior citizens properly for the services they have performed for Canada. I realize that we are all anticipating some changes in this area after the introduction of the government's white paper on social policy, but it might well be a year or more before we see any substantive legislation flowing from that document. Someone remarked the other day that inflation is a tax, and one which bears most heavily on those who can least afford it, our senior citizens. I feel strongly that we should be doing something to assist these people now, not a year and a half or two years from now.

● (8:40 p.m.)

Like many of my colleagues, I am looking forward to seeing the government's white paper on social policy. Like many, I share a feeling of malaise in that although we are spending billions of dollars to provide for the health and welfare of Canadians we are not, in all too many cases, really giving adequate assistance to those most in need of it. Because of the universal nature of so many of our programs, too much provision is made for those who really do not genuinely need it, and those who are in need are inadequately provided for.

I recently finished reading Ian Adam's "The Poverty Wall", and any concerned Canadian cannot help being depressed by the deprivation and grinding poverty in which five to six million Canadians live while the rest of us enjoy relative affluence. I would recommend this book to all members of this chamber to assist us in gaining a better perspective of the society in which we live. The stereotype of the welfare recipient is a healthy male, sprawled in an easy chair before a flickering television set and fondling a bottle of beer bought with his welfare money.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Like some of your constituents.

**Mr. Buchanan:** Maybe they are yours. It is this sort of stereotype, Mr. Speaker, which I believe has given too many Canadians a distorted view of the society in which we live.

The May-June issue of *Canadian Welfare* carried a study which had been carried out by Professor Steven Peitchinis at the University of Calgary. Even in the prosperous province of Alberta there were approximately 94,000 persons receiving some form of social assistance at the time of the study. In the area of Calgary, where the study concentrated, there were just under 19,000. Professor

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Peitchinis' profile of that group is revealing and it confirms what many social workers have been saying all along.

Why were these people dependent on welfare? Almost half, 45 per cent, were ill, incapacitated or unable to work because of age. Sole parents with children dependent on their care comprised 40 per cent of the sample. In the first draft of this study "sole" parents was spelled "soul"! However, it was corrected in the later version. The employed whose earnings were inadequate took up 10 per cent. Finally, those able to work but temporarily out of work for any reason numbered 10 per cent. This latter category includes those willing to work, at least temporarily, but unable to find a job. These findings would certainly seem to contradict the traditional image of those in receipt of social assistance.

Another area upon which I would like to comment concerns student loans. Loans are now provided for full-time students. Part-time students are denied these loans. Often part-time college students live in more genuine need than do full-time students. Frequently they are older than most of their colleagues, and they are almost never supported by wealthy families; indeed, that is why they are securing their degrees the hard way. Although they work to maintain themselves in school, many part-time students make only enough money to pay taxes and to support a wife and family but not enough to pay for tuition and books. They are classic examples of people reaching for betterment through higher education yet they are, if anything, discouraged from continuing studies that often take a decade to complete.

These are among the more enterprising members of our society. The government replies to their industry by ruling them ineligible for student awards. Frequently if sufficient funds were available the average, part-time student would accelerate his or her program to a full-time status. I would urge, Mr. Speaker, that the government look at this legislation and endeavour to make loan facilities available for the part-time student who is struggling to improve his condition as well as for the full-time student.

Almost one month ago the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) presented his proposed sports policy for Canadians in this House. That paper has my fullest support. This program may well reach millions of Canadians in more tangible ways than most government concepts do. Clearly