

*Canada Assistance Plan*

\$3,000 to \$5,000. Under the provisions of welfare the value of a house is considered as income, under means tests, and a needy mother cannot obtain assistance until such time as she has sold the house and used up the money she has received for it. These people must rid themselves of all their possessions and place themselves and families out on the street before help is given. Some of these widows have as many as eight children to look after and they have difficulty enough in finding a place to rent. It is downright inhuman to ask a widow to sell her house and possessions, and put herself in a destitute position before giving her assistance.

Let me refer to one example which occurred in my constituency. This woman was left a house by her husband when he died. She was sick and required assistance. She had a 22 year-old daughter who was earning \$35 per week. She was told that her daughter could help support the family and that before assistance would be provided she would have to sell her house and use up the money. I advised that woman to sell the house to her daughter and then rent it from her for \$45 per month. She did so, and now receives assistance because she does not own any property.

That is the kind of thing that was revolting to the people in the 16th and 17th centuries; yet these things are still taking place here in Canada. In view of the basic rights of people, as outlined by our Bill of Rights, these things should be prevented by this government. I may be reprimanded for the advice I gave the woman to which I have referred, but in view of present circumstances I would do exactly the same thing again.

Some of the legislation we pass in this house is based on common sense, but a good deal of it is not. I deplore that fact and suggest that it is up to us to correct it. We must provide our elderly people, the people who built this country, with some social security in the last years of their lives. We are too prone to forget the efforts many of the people of this country have made, when we come to passing out assistance. The veterans of his country are very often forgotten. In the 1940 to 1945 period they were considered as heroes, but today they are considered as zeroes. The war is now over and we are relatively safe so we can forget easily the fact that these people risked their lives and spent five, six or seven of their best years fighting for this country.

The government must pass legislation in order to control monetary policies if it cannot control them under present legislative provisions. I cannot understand why a country like Canada should still have great areas of poverty and misery. There is a difference between those who conditions. One can be poor in spirit and in a great many other ways, but economic misery is something that cannot be tolerated; and it should not exist in Canada. This is a country that is capable of supporting 200 million people, yet we have only 20 million, many of whom are in desperate economic need I refer to needy mothers, the blind and disabled. I can show you areas in cities like Montreal, Toronto and Quebec where the people live in such poverty that the children of 10, 14, 15 and 16 years of age leave home. I am sure after doing so they never again would like to live in conditions such as they left.

• (5:20 p.m.)

You do not have to go very far; you will find them in the slums that exist in every city in this country. I am glad the minister has included in the bill a provision to try to get social workers in greater number and with greater competence who will find out exactly what are the needs of these people. Perhaps in this way they will be able to obtain some relief. These social workers will be able to help those people feeling the effects of the high cost of living when they are receiving low incomes or perhaps have no income at all. Perhaps one day we will be able to enact a piece of legislation that will at least satisfy the basic needs of the people of this country. I certainly hope so, because if we forget these needs, and the human rights included in the Bill of Rights passed in 1960, our being in this house is completely useless and without reason.

We are here to maintain these privileges, to fight for these rights. I think it is high time we stopped talking politics and promising various things during election campaigns. We put ourselves forward to the people as shining, bright stars and give a glowing over-all picture which, in the back of our minds, very often we have no intention of implementing if we form the government.

The government started a war on poverty. I do not say the whole program is not good, because it does contain some good points. This is a start. But in this connection there are two points that should have been considered right from the beginning. I refer to a