

*Adjournment Debate*

prepared, through Canada assistance, to make moneys available specifically for the nutrition of these families in order to make it possible for poor parents to bring up their children on a proper standard of diet. His reply was that already, through the Canada Assistance Plan, the provinces are able to ask for half of their budgets for such purposes. This was a proper reply and I do not find fault with it. But, Mr. Speaker, most of us, I think, want more than that—I certainly do—from the minister.

The minister is to meet the provincial ministers in April. I urge him to go to the meeting prepared to give leadership to the provinces and prepared to do more than simply say that Canada Assistance Plan aid is available. I hope he will sell the provinces two important programs, both recommended by the National Council of Welfare in the report. According to the National Council of Welfare, the most important thing that could be done is introducing a program of guaranteed annual income for the whole of Canada. As a more immediate program they propose that there should be more food dollars, that more money should be devoted to helping poor people including, specifically, pregnant women, very young children, school children and elderly people.

The facts brought out by the report are startling. One Canadian in four lives below the poverty line. One of these four Canadians gets welfare, the other three do not. Families on welfare across Canada, if they are to spend an average of 30 cents per person per meal, must spend half their entire welfare allowance for food, clothing, shelter, utilities and fuel. That is what they must spend just to be able to afford an average of 30 cents a meal per person. Do you think it is possible to obtain good nutrition for 30 cents a meal? Just try it and see how far you get, with prices the way they are today.

Someone said to me that surely it would not be practical to boost the food dollar allowances of people on welfare so as to enable them to obtain proper nutrition. Practical, Mr. Speaker! Is it practical to spend an average of \$100,000 to keep a defective child in an institution for its entire life? Is that a practical way to spend the taxpayers' dollars. I doubt, it. To my mind it would be sheer lunacy if we were to allow things to go in that direction. I think the practical thing is to see that the nutrition of the pregnant mother and the young child is such that it is not born defective, disabled and having to become a burden on taxpayers for the rest of its life. The outlook is bleak indeed for the child who through no fault of its own is born disabled mentally, physically or both.

When the minister goes to the meeting with the provinces in April, I urge that he not only goes with the idea of what is available through Canada Assistance but goes prepared to urge that Canadians from coast to coast get behind the idea of a guaranteed annual income. Pending the implementation of that in full, we should be prepared to spend money on programs to get away from this penny-pinching attitude that we have which means dumping dollars down the drain. We should be prepared to look after the nutrition and good health of our people from their very beginning.

**Mr. Norman A. Cafik (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the remarks of the hon. member for

[Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway).]

Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis). One cannot do anything but agree with the sentiments she has expressed indicating her concern for those people in Canada who are undernourished. I think the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) shares that concern with the same degree of sincerity.

I wish to point out, as the minister has already done, that under the Canada Assistance Plan, as the hon. member indicated in her remarks tonight, we do in fact provide funds to the provinces to the tune of 50 cents for every dollar that they spend on welfare programs. The provinces determine the rules under which that money is spent and the municipalities in turn administer the program. The division of responsibility is quite clear and the division of dollars is quite clear. We pay 50 cents, the province pays 30 cents and the municipality pays 20 cents. As the hon. member stated, any province is free to increase the food allowance section of any welfare payments and the federal government is committed under the Canada Assistance Plan to match that money in the way I have described.

With regard to a guaranteed income for low-income families, we can turn to the Speech from the Throne for this session of the twenty-ninth parliament in which it was indicated that a guaranteed income would indeed be forthcoming for those who are unable to work. In addition, we have indicated that there will be an over-all review of the social security structure in Canada. We all share the hon. member's views that steps be taken in this over-all review to see that the kind of problem she has brought to our attention is indeed solved. It is the intention of the government in the over-all review that will be conducted in April to review the whole picture to try to do everything we can, in concert with the provinces, to ensure that those people in this country who are in need are properly looked after.

• (2210)

PENITENTIARIES—FAILURE OF JOHN CHARRON TO RETURN TO COLLINS BAY FOLLOWING RELEASE ON ONE-DAY PASS—RECONSIDERATION OF PAROLE POLICY

**Mr. Reg Stackhouse (Scarborough East):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this debate is to focus attention on the way in which abuses of the temporary leave and day parole programs are a danger to the public. The issue is not "Shall these programs continue or not?" but, rather, "Can they be administered so that public safety is not endangered?"

A man is permitted unescorted leave to visit a relative. He is in prison for armed robbery. He carried a sawed-off shotgun. But he is deemed suitable for unescorted leave. He goes his way. He does not return until, after some weeks, he surrenders. The point's stress here is not that he is back in custody. The point to stress is that a man capable of violent crime and capable of abusing leave should not have been allowed to threaten public safety.

Another inmate is under sentence for the murder of a police officer. He is allowed to attend university classes on his own. One night he stops for a drink. He has too many and is arrested for driving while impaired. The point to stress here is that a man capable of murder and capable