

Canada Assistance Plan

directly from the Canada Assistance Plan to any person in Canada who is in need. The money will go to the provinces to assist them in their welfare work, and where the provinces decide to pay extra money to people they can get a share of what they spend from the federal government, in accordance with the formula. But there is no dollar benefit from this legislation flowing to any individual in Canada.

The other comment I should like to make about this whole piece of legislation in the welfare field up to the point of retirement is that, though it is good, though it is better than what we have had, it is really not in line with the latest thinking in the welfare field. I believe Professor Titmus was perfectly right in the statement he made in Vancouver last week—that if you go on making people think they are poor in order to get welfare benefits, you are not really doing a job.

I think the phrase “guaranteed income” is no longer the fantastic, futuristic notion that some people think it is. I believe it is the next step, and it is a step which should be taken soon, not just with respect to old age but with respect to everyone. I see the day coming not far off when we shall see proposed and acted upon, not just a guaranteed income of the kind the other place suggested for older people, namely that incomes be assessed and shortfalls made up, but that cash allowances will be paid to everybody, people being categorized as to age and so on. Then the income tax will be adjusted to take it back from people who do not need it.

There is all the difference in the world between making up what people have got, giving them welfare or relief because of their shortfall, and just giving money or allowances to everybody and then, by the income tax, taking it back from those who do not need it. I shall have something to say in a few minutes about the trials and tribulations of some of our older people who are attempting to live on their old age pension. But despite the fact that it is a crime we should ask these people to get along today on \$75 a month, it is still to be noted that our older people today on a pension, which is theirs as of right, show a different attitude than the older people showed 30 years ago when pensions were given on the basis of a means test.

I have had contact with these people long enough to notice the difference. I remember what they were like 20 and 30 years ago. To get the old age pension carried a

stigma; it was almost a disgrace. Today, people 69 and over can talk about their old age pensions with pride and with pleasure. Many of them have to pay a good chunk of it back in income tax, but we removed, to an extent at any rate, the stigma which went with relief or make-up payments when we took the means test off the old age pension. This was one of the greatest steps the parliament of Canada ever took, and I was thrilled to have a part in doing it. I still think the principle of making cash allowances first and then making recoveries by income tax from those who do not need the allowance is far better than the welfare method even when the means test is superseded by the needs test. It is this type of thing I wish the government was doing at this time.

I know how much the Liberals dislike our saying on this side of the house that it takes them far too long to do these things. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) was somewhat annoyed with me when I reminded him, when at last he brought in a labour code, that he was fulfilling a promise which had been made by the Liberals before he was born. That is the trouble with hon. gentlemen opposite. Eventually they do bring in needed reforms, but they do so decades too late.

Today the government should be giving parliament and the country direction with respect to the whole idea of a guaranteed income. I can sing the praises of this bill as far as it produces a new look in the welfare field; but do not let the minister go to sleep with pleasant dreams because I said that. I would prefer him to have another sleepless night realizing that after all his labour he has brought forth a program which does not meet the needs of the 'sixties and 'seventies.

Up to this point I have been talking about this bill in relation to the welfare field up to the point of retirement. I have said that in general it is good, though I have pointed out it could have been a great deal better had hon. gentlemen opposite accepted some modern thinking. But when one looks at what this government is doing with respect to people who are in their years of retirement, I say that this Liberal administration, with all its talk about progress is asking this house to approve of a retrograde step. By this, I mean it is asking us to introduce for our retired people something we got rid of in 1950—a test on the basis of what they are getting from