

Family Planning Program

geographically from those to whom they can look for advice.

I think it is worth while questioning the sufficiency of the sum of \$100,000 granted to the Family Planning Federation of Canada to direct the publicity and advertising informing families of this service. I hope that, as the minister has stated, during the coming months he will increase government support to the provinces and voluntary groups.

Another question which should be answered is when the minister and the government will initiate legislation or regulations under the Food and Drug Directorate to require manufacturers of birth control devices to indicate on the label the level of effectiveness of their products.

I hope that the minister will also consult with his colleague, the Minister of Justice, for the purpose of clarifying the Criminal Code so that sterilization performed by qualified medical practitioners at the request of the patient will not involve criminal responsibility on the part of the practitioner.

We are pleased that the minister has chosen to implement some of the recommendations set out in the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, and we hope that this year's program will consist of more than a mere introduction.

I had hoped that we would hear the minister speak today about the relationship of the basic need for family planning to assistance programs under the Canada Assistance Plan to provide increased benefits to those who are poverty-stricken. There will be great disappointment, that the family income security plan, as was stated by the minister, will not be introduced now so that the needy may receive the benefits announced in the white paper on income security. This is also a part of family planning. It is obvious from the criticisms of the white paper by the Canadian Welfare Council that new reviews and discussions will have to take place in the cabinet. The delay will have a serious effect on many thousands of our citizens, and I implore the government to take the necessary action as quickly as possible. I hope the upcoming conference of provincial ministers of welfare will show Canadians that positive action will be forthcoming, and that ongoing discussions will take place in order to make progress in line with the document introduced today.

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the minister for his courtesy in making this statement and the accompanying document available in time to give us a chance to study it before commenting on it. I am sure all of us are very happy to be in on what the minister has described as the launching of a Canada-wide family planning program. I do not know whether he should have provided champagne for the launching. We will have to find out whether the ship is good, stout and seaworthy. She has been stuck on the ways for quite a while now, and I am very much relieved to see that at last she is going down to the sea.

It is not always that one has a chance to commend the minister for something really solid, apart from words, but there are certain solid features of this program which appeal very much to many hon. members. For one thing,

[Mr. Marshall.]

Mr. Speaker, the program is Canada-wide. This is an excellent thing at a time when the mobility of people is making boundaries, provincial or otherwise, less and less relevant.

Another point in the minister's statement on the program which I like very much was the indication that there is to be co-operation with the provinces, with the professions and with voluntary organizations. I am very glad that the minister used the plural—organizations.

Some people feel that the \$100,000 to be given to the Family Planning Organization is not a great deal in comparison with what will be needed to handle the business of family planning across Canada but, after all, this is probably just a start with the major family planning organization. It is obviously a very good start, and let us hope that there will be more to come. What I am glad to see is that \$100,000 in good hard cash is being made available for this purpose because, if the repeal of the provision in the Criminal Code which prevented the dissemination of birth control information was a milestone, as the minister described it, I am hoping this program will prove to be a second milestone on the way to helping people plan, space and limit their families. I am hoping that this will be a beginning in making the Canadian people realize that population experts are not just talking nonsense when they talk about the need to limit the average family to two children. If we cannot work in that direction, Mr. Speaker, then it is absolutely ridiculous to talk about improving the quality of life in this country because the quality of life is dependent on our keeping the population within bounds.

There is great need for this new planning program. I cite to hon. members the latest example that came to my attention. Just this morning I was told that more than half of the babies born in the Ottawa Civic Hospital last week were born out of wedlock. I am convinced it is not only in Ottawa that people need to be told about ways and means of not having children, particularly children that they cannot look after and do not welcome. I believe that contraception, family planning and birth control are the first line of defence against unwanted pregnancy.

I congratulate the minister on taking this action because it will mean that abortion will not be necessary on as wide a scale now that we are undertaking family planning by the other route of birth control and use of contraceptives. I know there is much lacking in this program, Mr. Speaker, but in the accompanying document I notice that the minister makes reference to the way in which the Canada Assistance Plan can be used or has a potential for use in dealing with family planning if the provinces come through with requests for programs and put up 50 per cent of the cost in order to get the other 50 per cent from the Department of National Health and Welfare.

Also, Mr. Speaker, for training personnel to staff family planning clinics both professional training grants and the National Welfare grants program can be used.

This is a very important subject, Mr. Speaker, but I am not going to trespass on the time of the House. I am just going to congratulate the minister on taking one of the very important steps recommended by the Royal Com-