

Adjournment Debate

I should note that there have been some changes since 1955 in the maximum monthly allowance, the age requirement and the maximum yearly income allowable. In 1955 the maximum monthly allowance was \$40. The allowance was increased in July 1957 to \$46 and in November 1957 to \$55. It was further increased in February 1962 to \$65, and finally in December 1963 it reached the present maximum of \$75.

We were also asked what action we intend to take to help persons on low incomes with mounting food prices. People in low incomes can be divided into two groups, those who are receiving social assistance and the working poor.

The working poor need not wait another five years until the proposals of the working paper become fruitful. We will soon be presenting legislation which will increase federal family allowances from the present average of \$7.21 per child per month to an average of \$20 per child. I expect that we will start payment of the increased benefits by January, 1974. It is true that, even after the increase in family allowances of the size proposed, there will still be families whose income, working income plus family allowances, will fall below an acceptable minimum or below the social assistance levels for which they would qualify if

they were on welfare. It is for this reason that we have advanced the idea of a general income supplementation plan to supplement the incomes of the working poor.

● (2230)

This proposal cannot be effected as quickly as the increases in family allowances because here we are entering into an area of provincial jurisdiction. It is only through a joint federal-provincial review that it will be possible to develop an over-all approach which will prevent us repeating mistakes of the past which have resulted in the present income security system becoming a patchwork quilt of programs.

Persons in receipt of social assistance will also be receiving the benefits of the increased family allowances. In addition, under the terms of the Canada Assistance Plan we continue to share in basic needs, which would include need for food. The provinces are free to adjust benefit levels to changing situations, and it is through the Plan that at the present time we are in a position to help persons in receipt of assistance, and in some cases persons on low incomes, to meet mounting food prices.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): End of quotation!

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.