

guaranteed income this would go a long way toward allowing these people to go back to the home. They are tearing themselves into pieces between working in the daytime and coming home miserably tired and overburdened, in an attempt to cope with their family and housekeeping duties in the evening. Then, there are single women, women without husbands, women who are divorced or separated, who are trying to do the double job of working and housekeeping. Then, there is the woman whose husband's pay is so low that she must join her little pay cheque with that of her husband in order to meet their needs. Here is where a guaranteed income would be of great benefit not only to the women but to Canada. We want to keep our Canadian homes on good foundations. While women who have better incomes, better education and financial backing can carry on careers without neglecting their homes, these other women cannot do so. I think a guaranteed income would help these people.

Then, we have heard about the women whose husbands are in receipt of the old age pension but who themselves have no chance of receiving it for a few years. Such a woman might be 45 years of age. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, try to find a job for a woman 45 years of age unless she happens to be highly qualified in a technical way. She is simply out of luck.

These are some of the reasons we support the idea of a guaranteed income. I want to agree with the hon. member for Hillsborough and the hon. member who introduced this motion by indicating that this would be a mark of the degree of our civilization if we could now bring in this measure. In this last year we have seen the utter futility of increasing pensions when the people see the dollars being eaten away because of increased prices, increased rents, the increase in the cost of clothing and many other items. There is no sense in this. We must have some stabilized form of income if we are to have a secure and decent life for the Canadian people. Let us think in those terms. If a guaranteed income is to work we must think in these terms, and our party will push for this no matter where the move originates or who introduces it.

Mr. Norman A. Cafik (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the motion we have before us today introduced by the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte) is really in three parts. The first is that the government has taken no concrete steps to ensure the establishment of a guaranteed minimum annual income to overcome poverty in Canada. The second element deals with Canadians coping with the problem of rising prices. The third is almost the same. I presume the hon. member means that the guaranteed annual income he has in mind would be in fact an efficient and total way to fight inflation.

Since there is not sufficient time to deal with all the elements involved in this motion, I should like first of all to try to deal with the question of a guaranteed income in order to overcome poverty. Some of us often forget that there is a guaranteed income in Canada now. Although it does not cover all people it certainly covers the senior citizens in this country. This fact is often conveniently overlooked. For instance, as of January 1, 1974 the OAS and GIS payments to single people are \$183.99 per month and to a married couple \$351.02. That in essence is the

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guaranteed income level for people over age 65. This factor cannot be ignored when talking about a guaranteed income in Canada.

The other point I should like to refer to is that made by the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) when she said that these benefits are often eaten away by inflation. I am sure the hon. member and all hon. members in this House realize that the increase in the cost of living is automatically added to the amount of the OAS and the GIS payments to our senior citizens on a quarterly basis. This means that if it is eaten up in one period, it is made up in the next period. That fact also seems to be forgotten by many people.

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The other point is that we must look at the problem of a guaranteed annual income in the perspective of the overall social priorities in Canada. On April 18, 1973, the government tabled a working paper in this House on social security. It deals with this very question and a broad series of other questions relating to the wellbeing of Canadians, particularly those on social assistance of one kind or another. In addition to the working paper there has been much action as a consequence of the proposals put forward at that time, specifically in relation to a guaranteed annual income, especially in the province of Manitoba. As a matter of fact, there the project the federal government is in the process of embarking upon is a guaranteed annual income experimental program at a cost of \$17 million, 75 per cent of which is provided for out of federal funds. This program will cover approximately 2,500 families over a period of three years and its purpose is to find out the social impact of a guaranteed income program in this country.

It is important to note that such a program leaves many unanswered questions. It is not good enough to simply say that we need a guaranteed annual income in Canada. You must find out what kind of levels we are talking about, what kind of recovery rates are involved for income that is earned by people outside of the amount guaranteed by the government. There are a whole lot of unanswered questions, and it is imperative for any responsible government embarking on a program of such significance to find out what the impact is on society in general, particularly on the question which is very central to the minds of all of us, namely work incentives in our country. That program is a very important step forward in determining answers to the whole matter of guaranteed annual incomes in Canada. It is a very important project, one that the federal government has embarked upon with the province, and I am sure that it will shed very substantial light on the over-all question.

However, I think that in addition to that program one must look, as I mentioned before, at the over-all problem of social security in Canada. The review that was embarked upon on April 18 is founded on a number of essential principles. I think that one of the most important principles underlying that review was that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) in conjunction with provincial ministers of health and welfare agreed upon one essential point, namely, that the problem of jurisdiction and of who is responsible for the implementation of what kind of program, should be set aside for the