

think that the failure of the federal government's fitness and amateur sports policy lies in the fact that the fitness part of it is virtually left out. More money has been given to sports associations and athletic organizations than has been relegated to the average physically unfit Canadian. Here is where other countries set an example which we should follow. It seems to me that if federal moneys have been given to promoting physical fitness there have been great gaps. I am told there is a city in the western part of this country, that rediscovered part of our domain, where the church bells ring at a certain hour in the evening to remind people to go out and take a walk. Well, walking is something that does not require a tremendously elaborate program on the part of government at any jurisdictional level.

I am convinced that not only do we tend to emphasize those sports which lead to competitive excellence, and tend to emphasize competitive sports themselves, but we do not sufficiently assist and encourage the generality of participation not only of the potential winners of gold, silver, or bronze medals, but the potentially healthy Canadian. This should be our goal. This is what our physical fitness education people and our health and sports leaders, assisted by the government, must move toward. We must promote physical fitness for all the population. We must, it seems to me, encourage not only those sports which can lead to the winning of medals, but those healthy physical activities which can indeed be called lifetime activities; the kind of things which the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) and I, at the mid-century mark, could engage in hopefully to the benefit of ourselves and to the country. It seems to me that the whole concept of fitness involves just such consideration. Then, I would hope that we will surpass the 21st mark on the scale of physical fitness.

Recognizing that something must be done I would invite the minister—I am not all that upset about this item and how it came about—for so long as he is there to utilize the pre-Olympics period as a great opportunity to bring to all Canadians a price in healthful living, a stimulus toward physical fitness and encouragement to our young, not only those with the capacity for potential excellence in international or national competition but those in the schools of the land. I do not limit my suggestion to the great and shining composite high schools in great cities, but all schools. Prizing as it does, and prizing as it must, the health and wellbeing of its people, the government must decide that we shall move forward along these lines with the knowledge that physical fitness has and must be a major national goal, and that health and physical fitness are tied together. I think we can encourage such things as regional training centres which would encourage and stimulate greater activity in this matter of such tremendous importance.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to the other vote, one of tremendous importance; income security and social assistance programs. Compared to many countries in the world I think Canada has a reasonably good record in this regard. I do not know that anyone has taken a poll as to where we stand in the matter of income security and social assistance, but I think we would not stand as low as 21st in that regard. I think we would do much better. As the economy develops particular problems for the poor,

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the handicapped and the aged, we have constantly to review the goals. In the last report of the minister's department, a section under economic security sets out a very simple statement at the beginning with which we all agree and with which we can not take exception. It reads as follows:

• (1240)

Canada's federal welfare benefit programs were initially designed to ensure that everyone has an adequate income and, over the years, they have been redesigned to meet changing demands.

Item 40a is one of these sudden moves to bring about something, not, I presume, under income security but in the realm of social assistance. I refer to the New Horizons program. The minister has just arrived. He may be somewhat surprised by the laconic brevity of the debate, but I can tell him I did not expect to begin this part of the debate until after the noon hour. However, I am glad to have the minister here where he will at least be a captive audience for the next few minutes. The New Horizons program is new all right. Some nasty people might say it was conjured up just because of the event that took place on October 30, which we all remember well with somewhat different emotions. But in so far as it was thought inspired in an age when the youth cult was very much the "in thing", I commend the idea that those who have reached the golden years deserve special attention.

There are great times and great things for those who are no longer young. In our openness and concern, and indeed our priority, for the young we should not forget those on the other end of the spectrum. Certainly, I think this is commendable. So far as I have been able to study the program, I am not at all sure it has been overwhelmingly successful. I would say probably it is a little early to make any kind of a judgment. If it was necessary that it be introduced when it was—and I make no reference to the October 30 deadline—it would have had to come in as a supplementary estimate. But far more important—and I do not hesitate to say this—than the development of the New Horizons program and the creation of interesting things for senior citizens today is the statement in the first part of the paragraph which I read from the minister's report. I repeat the words:

... programs were initially designed to ensure that everyone has an adequate income ...

I know many of the people of Canada who are in their late sixties, seventies or eighties who are living in homes or attend senior citizens clubs. One of the most pleasant evenings I spent in September was when I attended a gathering of this kind. The evening started with the 70-year olds step dancing. This is a great pastime in Prince Edward Island. The 80 year olds were a bit miffed at the 70-year olds taking over and they did their stuff. The last performers were 92 years of age. They were having a good time. This sort of thing is important. We have reached the stage where no longer do senior members of society remain within the family unit. The state has recognized this fact and has built special homes for these people. Because of the social, intellectual and recreational aspect this is all to the good.

An hon. Member: Did you take part in the dancing also?