

suggestion of using schools to provide food to children and their families. . . .(I)t perhaps begs the question of giving families the money to provide food for their own children."¹²³ Further, the Minister of National Health and Welfare indicated that a school food program would be a program that would come under provincial jurisdiction, since the provision of education and the delivery of social services into the community are the responsibility of the provinces.¹²⁴

The Sub-Committee commends the food banks across Canada, which are instrumental in improving the life situation of poor families and children. As pointed out to the Sub-Committee by the Canadian Association of Food Banks, "(t)here are more food bank outlets today in Canada than any restaurant or grocery supermarket chain in the country."¹²⁵ It is the Association's belief that the largest single social group at risk of needing assistance are children under the age of 18, and that food bank users would go hungry without the services provided by food banks. Further, the Sub-Committee commends corporate, private and other contributors to food banks for their generosity.

The Canadian Association of Food Banks spoke to the Sub-Committee about the origins of food banks. It said that:

every food bank opened up on a temporary basis, in most respects, except for the recovery of food and that was being channelled — 60% to 70% went to the battered women's shelters and so on. It was not going to [meet] emergency [needs]. . . .We want to replace the need for food banks . . .¹²⁶

The Association went on to note that:

I think you will not see food banks providing emergency services one minute longer than they are needed, . . . What you might see is an ecologically based thing that has been going on for ten years, where food will be put in the hands of social agencies to use in preventive ways. . . . You would probably have to get rid of the food bank name. Very few people have that aspiration. Most people just simply agree that it is silly to throw out that resource, because it is considerable and it is a social good in and of itself, even if it is not adequate for meeting peoples' food needs.¹²⁷

The Sub-Committee does not believe that food banks should become institutionalized. Rather, the Sub-Committee feels that their role should change from the alleviation of hunger to the recovery of surplus foods for redistribution, a change which would represent a return to their original role. The Sub-Committee believes that the federal government has a role to play in providing an economic, training and job creation environment that will provide families with sufficient income to enable them to feed their children.

The Sub-Committee believes that the eradication of child poverty will require the efforts of all levels of government, as well as the community. An emphasis on community and local government was suggested by several witnesses. The Conseil des affaires sociales du Québec told the Sub-Committee that:

if we want all our citizens to be active and help create wealth in this country and keep it among the richest nations in the OECD, we are going to have to take a different approach. What we are talking

¹²³ *Proceedings*, Issue 8, p. 11.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹²⁵ *Proceedings*, Issue 11, p. 24.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48.