

Supply

The federal government also has a role in social services. While social assistance and social services are matters of provincial jurisdiction, and provinces determine policies with respect to the services, the federal government cost shares eligible provincial expenditures under the Canada Assistance Plan.

Current federal expenditures under this plan, called CAP, are about \$6.3 billion in the fiscal year 1991-92. Moreover the federal government in co-operation with provincial governments is working to address housing needs of disadvantaged Canadians.

In 1990, the construction or renovation of over 42,000 new households was funded through federal social housing programs. Most of these programs were cost shared with the provinces and/or the territories. We have to address their sheltered needs. Besides that, over 640,000 households are now being assisted on an annual basis. There is a lot more that can be done and there is probably a lot more that should be done, but we are addressing the needs with the funds that are available.

The government is also committed to improving Canada's health care system to make one of the world's finest and best even better.

As the delivery of health services is a constitutional responsibility of the provinces, it is their responsibility to determine the needs, make the services available, and manage health costs.

The primary role of the Government of Canada is to make a financial contribution in support of provincial health programs. Under Established Programs Financing, transfers to provinces for hospital and medical services and extended health care came to an estimated \$14.3 billion in the fiscal year which just ended.

That amount represented a significant increase over the value of health transfers during the previous year. EPF transfers will continue to grow. The federal government is committed to enhancing the health of Canadians through medical and health services research.

The Medical Research Council supports more than \$200 million worth of grants and scholarships in aid of research every year. The National Health, Research and Development Program also supports research in the operation of health care delivery, the system of health

care delivery in Canada as well as the causes and treatment of AIDS and Alzheimer's.

The government's commitment to addressing major threats to the health and well-being of Canadians is reflected in our funding of special programs to reduce substance and drug abuse such as the national drug strategy.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare has signed several federal-provincial agreements which will provide funding for alcohol and drug abuse programs throughout Canada.

These agreements which will provide \$20 million this year and each subsequent year will help those caught up in a vicious circle of drug and chemical abuse. Of course, we cannot forget the system of benefits for our elderly, central in its Old Age Security Program, which provides a basic floor for elderly Canadians that meet minimum residence requirements.

This basic benefit valued at more than \$4,400 per pensioner is received by over three million citizens. In addition, the Guaranteed Income Supplement assists low income senior citizens by providing non-taxable benefits to those Old Age Security benefit recipients with little or no other income.

The Guaranteed Income Supplement recognizes the reality faced by many of today's senior citizens and targets benefits accordingly by providing an income tested benefit which directs most of the help to most of those in need.

I cannot overstate this government's concerns about poverty and its effect on children and families. For me, there is no other single issue which stands out that needs more time, more effort and more attention from all Canadians.

In fact, one of the major objectives of this government is to invest in our children and see them better educated, better protected and better nurtured so they can make their own contributions to our future.

In 1990 we watched children take on a new importance in world politics. At the World Summit for Children which was co-chaired by our Prime Minister, leaders of 70 nations adopted the world's declaration on the survival, protection and development of children and the action plan.