

Canada Assistance Plan

born in Canada are born out of wedlock. Included in the category of people needing assistance are the disabled, the sick, the retarded, the mentally ill, as well as the rural farmers and the migrant workers. The federation of labour concluded that 6.5 million Canadians live below the hard line which separates poverty and affluence. It was stressed that the most important cause of poverty was the lack of education.

I think that in considering this legislation we should bear in mind that the more education we give to our younger people, the greater number of people over the age of 45 will become unemployed—due to automation and the better trained young people. We should go into the home of the unemployed, or the underemployed worker so as to discover the real cause of their problem. Is the cause of their poverty lack of education or functional illiteracy? When we have discovered the reason for these people being on welfare, then re-education or retraining should be considered. If it is found that this state of poverty is chronic and is not due to some physical disability or sickness, then I think we should take a good look at the environment in which these people live. This is graphically illustrated in the figures put out by the welfare department, which show five or six generations of people who have been living on relief and welfare. The welfare of the children should also be considered because according to the surveys that have been made in the United States they are often undernourished and 80 per cent of them have problems of one kind or another, some physical and some emotional. They need a medical examination and they all need to see a dentist and an oculist. Apart from their physical problems some of those children have a lower than normal I.Q. and if they are given an opportunity to get some pre-elementary schooling most surveys indicate that their I.Q. will go up by about 10 per cent and that they will be able to catch up in from a few months to a year. Physically they will develop, and they will develop mentally a whole year in a few months.

This is the type of work that we should be doing under the Canada Assistance Act, if there is to be a war on poverty. It is not enough to spend money in helping those people; efforts should be made to change their environment and mode of life.

I now wish to speak on the problem regarding older people. We find that the prob-

lem of unemployment becomes a serious factor in people over the age of 45. The statistics show that the unemployment rates are higher in people between the ages of 45 and 65 than they are between the ages of 22 and 45. I am sure nobody knows that better than the minister, as he was minister of labour. The reason for this is the increasing change in education and technology. People at the age of 45 did not have the chance to acquire education which our younger people now have, and this problem must be met. They must be retrained to give them a chance to earn a living.

I now wish to speak of the older citizens. I do not think that they should retire at the age of 65 if physically fit. I would suggest to the minister that under the Canada Assistance Act provision should be made for retraining of people at and over the age of 65, and they should be given a creative type of work so as to enable them to take part in the growing economy of this country. This is a very important problem and related directly to their employment and happiness.

I now wish to read a few lines from the final report of the special committee of the Senate on aging, where it is said—in relation to the above:

That employment has important psychological values as well as stressed continually in the evidence received by the committee. Said the Jewish Vocational Service of Toronto in its submission: "Work gives form, dimension and meaning to the life of the average citizen". And there was Mr. W., a retired widower, on an income of \$150 a month, who, when the chairman asked him what he missed in retirement, replied, "Mostly getting up and going to work in the morning, catching the bus at a certain time—and just general routine".

This is one of the most important problems in the study of geriatrics. I have stated this before and the minister is well aware of the fact that half the people in Canada today are 25 years and under.

I wish to say to the minister that if this government have vision they will be looking to the years ahead when half the population of Canada will be 30 years of age and over. I was looking at the figures given by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics which show that there are more deaths than births in Canada today in the last report. I cite this as an indication that not only from the economic point of view but for their own peace of mind we must keep our older worker working. He is happy working. Then he is part of the team and part of Canada. He has his