

government agencies, the Canadian Welfare Council, the Metis Associations of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, in one group, and the Company of Young Canadians. I can perhaps best describe the general theme recurring throughout the hearings in this way: in order to eradicate poverty we need conditions of a stable rate of economic growth, high employment and stable prices. These will not in themselves solve the poverty problem, but they will help in finding a solution. Secondly, there must be a major shift in the distribution of income among Canadians. It may well surprise you when I say, and here I am repeating what is to be found in the record of the Economic Council, that there has been no redistribution of income in this country since 1952. To put it in crude terms, the rich have got richer and the poor have got poorer.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): Relatively and absolutely?

Hon. Mr. Croll: I think that is right—certainly relatively.

The guaranteed annual income was supported, and it was felt that there should be a government agency responsible for co-ordinating and assembling anti-poverty programs and that poverty should be regarded as a problem in its own right. The community development types of activity are very valuable. As I have said, this is the substance of the evidence heard by the committee.

Now, permit me for a moment to deal with our plans for the future. On Monday next the committee will visit the Maritimes—Halifax and Charlottetown—where we will hear from people in the area. Then we return to Ottawa where we have a meeting with the Economic Council. In the week of November 16 we travel to Winnipeg and Vancouver. After that we plan to spend a week in the Montreal area and a week in the Toronto area, with further plans to visit each of the provinces as time permits and arrangements can be made. I might summarize our purpose as being to look, to see, to hear, to meet and to try to get the feeling of the poor and those people in the community who are interested in the poor.

For 1970 we have 57 firm commitments by national, provincial and private organizations who wish to be heard. There are 20 organizations who wish to present briefs but who may not have to be heard. We have to make provisions for hearing from the provinces and

municipalities and we have to call Canadian, American and other experts and social workers. These latter will probably appear by invitation because we may want them to cover special areas. I think you will agree with me that it looks like a very busy year.

In order to contact the poor in every province, two members of our community liaison staff have been across the country twice to meet and visit with them. We think that their involvement is essential because the poor have a role to play and must have a voice in their own destiny. A place must be carved out for them around the decision tables. And, once and for all, if we are going to succeed they must enter the in-group.

This committee has no pre-conceived or pre-packaged solutions; they wish they had. However, they do have views. At this stage they are simply listening and questioning.

At first sight this poverty study seemed like a frightening undertaking. After the hearings progressed it became merely formidable; now, although we have barely scratched the surface, we can see some daylight. Attitudes have changed since we began that lonely odyssey with the committee. We are now reaching bandwagon proportions. I think the poor can take heart.

But, honourable senators, what are we doing that is different? We are the first body to view our poverty and welfare systems as they affect the people of Canada in totality. We identify the people who are in poverty, not as statistics and not as a percentage of the population but as people who bleed, people who are ordinary human beings. We ask the Canadian people to meet them because we are sure they will recognize them. Some of them will be neighbours, some will be friends, some will be relatives and some will be children who play with their children. For this reason we think they will be very much concerned.

Let me give you a clearer picture. The welfare state was born during the depression in the 1930's. The economic system had lost its footing. There was a great emergency and improvisation measures had to be taken. The existence of unemployment on so vast a scale and the suddenness of the impact marked the end of an era in which social services were designed for social delinquents. It was the beginning of a new day in which the resources of the community and of the nation were made available to all as of right. The federal Government began to make contributions to relief and welfare in 1930, and this in