

Canada-U.S. Food-Aid Program

potato chips or hot dogs or something else which is not necessarily the best food available.

The various aspects of undernourishment should be considered because in Canada, as I stated, we cannot really say that some people are undernourished due to the lack of money. It is more of matter of a lack of suitable choice.

I have personally examined some family budgets. After discussing with the housewife who told me, to my great surprise, that she fed five children and her husband on a budget of \$35 a week, I as somewhat shocked to see what my own small family cost me. My first reaction was this: my wife does not manage the budget properly.

Naturally, when one can buy goods of better quality, or even some luxuries, more can be spent on food, but that does not necessarily mean that the food is more nourishing. Therefore, if we take a close look at the problem raised we realize that we have not reached the point of having to urgently apply the American program to Canada.

If, on the other hand, it has been thought desirable to take a look at what is happening in neighbouring countries in order to determine if their food aid programs or other forms of assistance are better than ours, we naturally turn to the United States to get this type of information. They have what is in that country, a program called a food stamps program whereby people can buy food in grocery stores by producing a series of stamps.

These stamps cannot be exchanged for money, that is absolutely prohibited, and when the stamps' value is greater than the value of goods purchased, the retailer has to give back to the client a kind of receipt that he can use again at some other time.

The system introduced in the United States in 1964, the relevant Act having been amended several times and again just recently in January 1971, costs the United States treasury some two billion dollars, and a total cost of two and half billion dollars is anticipated for next year's budget.

Of course, spread out over 200,000,000 inhabitants, that does not represent too much per capita but in order to apply such legislation in our country the figure should be divided by 10. It is thus clear that a nutrition program similar to the one in the United States would cost us some \$250 million. Consequently, should the federal government have to pay out such an amount in addition to those it is already contributing through cost-sharing programs and social legislation, it will readily be realized that the budget for assistance to underprivileged people would reach astronomic figures.

It must be noted that in Canada the number of persons engaged in food production is much greater than in the United States. We must be aware also that the American economy may support measures which we could not add to those already existing. Their effects on the sale of food must also be assessed. What would happen if people being helped now under welfare measures were receiving greater assistance under a food stamps program?

These are implications we have to consider because they will have short-, medium- and long-term effects

[Mr. Lessard (Lac-Saint-Jean).]

However the American program features one point of interest to me: in Canada we give money to the needy under welfare measures. I wonder sometimes, consideration being taken of these people's talents, if they put to good use the money made available to them.

Would the establishment of a stamp system which would compel them to use part of their budget for food be preferable to the present system? This is a point worth considering and studying longer. We are unable to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. I regret having to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary, but it being six o'clock I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

[English]

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**PUBLIC SERVICE****REPORT ON INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST JULES DEMICHER**

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might interrupt the normal proceedings at this point to seek the unanimous consent of the House to revert to motions for the purpose of tabling a document and making an explanation.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, earlier today I was asked a question about a settlement reached in the case of the complaint by Mr. Jules Demicher, which at my request was investigated by Professor Walter Tarnopolsky, Dean of Law at the University of Windsor.

At the time of my reply I had not actually seen the report submitted by Dean Tarnopolsky. It consists of a short letter in which he conveys to me a request from the parties affected by the complaint that I make public the agreement embodying the settlement, which was appended to his letter.

In view of the interest expressed by several members of the House, and in view of the fact that a partial report on the settlement appeared in one of the evening papers in spite of the fact that all parties agreed to not divulge this information until I had a chance to convey this report to the House, I should like to table a copy of the letter received from Dean Tarnopolsky and of the agreement recording settlement.