

**POVERTY***continued from page 9*

problem. We have a very serious crisis in Canada around homelessness because we don't have a national housing strategy."

Most recently, a leaked cabinet memo showed a recommendation by Bradshaw to her colleagues to increase funding for housing by \$700-million, in addition to the \$50-million already being spent. Many of her recommendations address ideas from Golden's report.

As well, Bradshaw saw that \$1.2-million was earmarked specifically for Toronto to deal with emergency shelters this winter.

This is encouraging for those working on the front lines of poverty.

"Ann [Golden] believes it's a step in the right direction," says a United Way representative for Ann Golden. "The government is giving it attention, but it requires a three government level approach."

But whatever action needs to be taken to combat poverty in Canada, most activists recognize Bradshaw was never appointed to come up with all the answers. The Campaign 2000 report recognizes this and turns the heat onto other federal cabinet ministers.

In the foyer outside of the House of

Commons, Minister of Human Resources and Development Jane Stewart goes to meet reporters following the release of the Campaign 2000 report and a round of intense debate during question period. Many of the group's recommendations will require action from her department along with the infusion of money from Finance Minister Paul Martin.

"Without question, it's clear that we've been through some difficult times as a country. The last decade has been particularly challenging financially for us but we've got our house in order," explains Stewart in response to media queries about her own plans to combat poverty.

Her solutions lie in an increase to the National Child Benefit, a program that gives increased benefits to families with incomes levels under \$26,000 and increased funding to provincial services and benefits for low-income families.

"What we have found though in the context of at least the time we've been here is we have continued to make investments. And some of the things that have been done, most particularly, reflect a new relationship with the provinces and when we look at the national child benefit," she adds, "it's an investment of \$2-billion going to low-income Canadian fami-

lies."

"Balderdash," responds Broadbent to Stewart's claims. "The country to the south of us has the highest GDP in the world. It also has the highest disparities between the rich and the poor of any of the industrialized nations."

"What we've seen," he continues, "is a decade at the outset where there was some downturn in the economy, but a decade that, quit disproportionate to the downturn, programs were cut and slashed that hit kids in particular."

"Just market growth on its own won't do the trick," he concludes.

But the \$16-billion being demanded by groups like Campaign

2000 is far more than the \$700-million being requested by Bradshaw for housing, and the \$2-billion being promised by Stewart for new HRDC programs.

Back at the release of Campaign 2000's report, Laurel Rothman attempts to outline the damage child poverty will have to Canadian society.

"In a world where achievement and independence depend on the skills and abilities of every citizen in our country, Canada needs each citizen to flourish," she says. "Poverty can rob children of their opportunity to contribute to their fullest potential and it robs us all of their contribution."

Outside, the weather continues to get

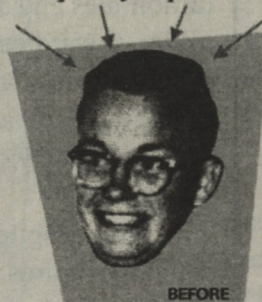
colder and snow flurries aren't far away. Many families paying more than half of their income toward rent face increased stress as they head into holiday season. Homeless people are searching for new places to pass their nights. Social workers aren't sure how many people they'll be able to help this winter.

And all of these people will face the harsh realities of another Canadian winter much sooner than Paul Martin will deliver the budget speech, expected in mid-February. And for most of them, making it to February will mean they have got over the hump - a short reprieve until next year.

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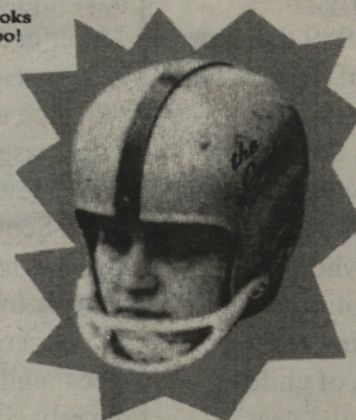
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