

Canadian Economy

That is a definition.

For the National Welfare Council . . . A poor family or individual is one who must spend more than 62 per cent of its or his income to meet its or his vital needs: food, housing and clothing.

I believe that this is also a very good definition of poverty. It is reported that 20 per cent of Canadian families and individuals are in that situation, Madam Speaker. This is why I agree with the motion of the New Democratic Party to request urgently not parsimoniously given measures, but effective measures to solve once and for all the problem of poverty.

In the report submitted recently by the National Welfare Council on poor children in Canada, it is said that, according to Statistics Canada following the 1971 census:

One quarter of all Canadian children (24.5%) are now living in poverty.

This situation has an impact on the whole development of the child, on all his education, on all his training. As concerns health, for instance, and I quote:

The implementation in Canada of the Health Insurance Plan in the 1960's aimed at giving the whole population of Canada access to medical services. Obviously, this goal has not yet been attained. One study entitled "Economic Class and Access to Physician Services under Public Medical Care Insurance", which examined the use of medical services in Saskatchewan between 1963 and 1968, concluded that:

"After six years of experience with a medical insurance system, low income classes still have less access to physician services."

Madam Speaker, we can see the same thing in the province of Quebec, without having to make an inquiry. You only have to visit any one of our hospitals to realize it. I quote:

Why? You cannot change old behaviour patterns overnight. If a mother must take her child to see the doctor and has to take a taxi to do so, the taxi will cost her something.

That is obvious. But if the mother is poor and has a low income, this becomes important.

She may also have to pay a babysitter.

And if the illness requires transport by ambulance, it is catastrophic because it is then very expensive and no public service, in the province of Quebec at least, pays for transport by ambulance. I quote further:

. . . If she sees the doctor, she will perhaps have drugs to pay for, because drugs are free for only a few people. Thus the so-called "free" access is not really free.

The sources of these health problems can be found even before birth: the child from a poor family has 50 per cent more chances to be born prematurely . . .

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allocated to him is over.

[Mr. Laprise.]

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to advise the House of the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment: the hon. member for York-Sunbury (Mr. Howie)—National Defence; the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie)—Prime Minister's office.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Baldwin: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order not related to the present debate. I saw the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen) in deep consultation with the government House leader, who was going to come into the House at around five o'clock to make an announcement of interest. I wonder if he knows when the government House leader will be back, and can he give us any exciting forewarning of what he is going to say?

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, my information is that the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) has played his usual statesmanlike role and accepted the suggestion of the hon. member, and that tomorrow we will be dealing with Bill C-50.

Mr. Baldwin: Further to the point of order, the only reason I rise again is to say that if more ministers were statesmanlike and accepted suggestions from this side of the House, this would be a better parliament. In addition, we might have to have an order of the House discharging the order for tomorrow and the days next week which are set down as allotted days. I assume the proposal would be that any consequential order of the House that is required to carry these proposals into effect would be made. As the matter now stands, there is set down on the order paper for Friday next, which is tomorrow, an allotted day, and also on Tuesday and Wednesday. I think part of the arrangement is that these days should not be allotted days, certainly not tomorrow. I think we would require an order to this effect before six o'clock. I may be wrong in that, but I assume it would be acceptable.

● (1710)

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I would think the hon. member's suggestion, in the present mood, would be acceptable. We would be willing to agree to an order of the House discharging the opposition day and deferring it to another day, provided we proceed with Bill C-50, the agricultural stabilization bill. If we finish that bill, we will be in a better position to advise the House on its business. In any event, we agree to that order of the House.