

Canada. The terrible plight of so many of the children of our minorities is unmistakable.

Regarding women in poverty, families headed by women, and unattached women, constitute a significant proportion of the poor. Of all families headed by women, about 35 per cent have low incomes. With a married couple, a wife participating in the labour force can boost the family income. The woman who is the family head can only count on her own earnings, if she works, which average less than a man's. Often such family heads are widowed, deserted, separated or divorced and have dependent children, making their economic and social position that much worse. With practically no income of her own, she may be struggling along on social allowance because she feels obliged to give her children full-time care or cannot find employment. On the other hand, she may be working part or full-time and coping as best she can with her children's needs in her off hours.

Why does poverty persist? It is often argued that anyone who wants to escape from poverty can do so simply by seeking and accepting work. It is contended that the poor should be expected to lift themselves out of poverty without any help from society. Those who favour such arguments ignore the social factors which prevent people escaping from poverty. The more important factors are family size, ill health, education, location of poverty, housing, low earnings and the poverty spiral. I could list many. I wish to deal with a few of these factors.

With regard to family size, the cost of supporting a large number of children can result in poverty for workers with even relatively high earnings. The average Canadian family has three or four children. While the birth rate has been dropping steadily in recent years, the decline has not been uniform. Rural-urban differences and differences between socio-economic classes are still noticeable. Families in which the head had the least education are generally the largest. Consequently, big families have the least capacity for overcoming poverty and tend to have the worst poverty problems.

On the matter of ill health, the results of the Canadian sickness survey of 1950-51 indicate that ill health is one of the main reasons for people becoming and remaining poor. The low income group suffer proportionately from more disabling illnesses than the rich, and receive a smaller amount of health care. Children under 15 in the low income group are also more affected than those of corresponding age in higher income families. Although the most advanced medical techniques in the world are available in Canada, the poor receive a lesser advantage from them. In fact, the sickness survey confirmed for Canada the crude correlation shown by other studies between infant mortality rates and per capita personal incomes. Ontario, with the highest income, had the lowest death rate; Newfoundland, with the lowest income, had the highest.

There is evidence to prove that no group suffers more ill health than the poor. Medical authorities state that the

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poor have more heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, unrehabilitated injury, mental illness, tuberculosis, illness whether chronic or acute, and higher death rates in all ages than do Canadians at large. Medical advances benefit the poor only after a certain time lag.

With regard to education, the relationship between low levels of education and poverty is obvious. A 1966 DBS study showed that in February, 1965, workers with some elementary schooling or less had an unemployment rate of 13.8 per cent, compared with 1.9 per cent for those with high school education or more. Also, with respect to duration of unemployment the study shows that 63 per cent of workers who finished elementary school or less were unemployed for four months or more, compared with 10 per cent for those with high school education or better. In 1961, 47 per cent of all Canadians aged 15 and over had no more than elementary schooling. With a high proportion of the poor being uneducated, it is unrealistic to expect great improvement in terms of income. Those with a low level of education receive the low paying jobs which offer little opportunity for advancement.

Regarding location of poverty, Canada has two kinds of economic inequality related to geography: urban-rural and regional. More than half of Canadian low income families live in cities and 45 per cent live in rural areas.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order! I regret having to interrupt the hon. member, but I must point out to him that his allotted time has now expired.

[*English*]

Mr. James Hugh Faulkner (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I came into the House for private members' hour today primarily to listen to the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) present, defend and develop the motion she has put before the House. I did not intend to enter the debate. However, in light of some of the points she has made, I wish to make a few spontaneous remarks on what I consider to be one of the most important notices of motion to appear on the Order Paper to date.

Having listened to the lecture and the rhetoric of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway, I cannot help but feel that she and her colleagues must be disappointed in the substance of what she has said. There is no question but that she was critical of the government. It is undoubtedly true there are areas in which the government can legitimately be criticized. That is a truism. It is certainly the case that poverty presents us with a problem, perhaps the most serious and pressing which we confront at this time. But when the hon. member introduces a motion which deals with the concept of redistributing income, of planning our productive resources and creating wealth by using modern technology, I do not find it easy to forgive her for failing to elaborate on the substance of her motion or to offer any detail concerning the reasonable and important concepts we are asked to consider.