

Mortality Rate Among Indians

I do not want to minimize in any way the importance of the procedural point he has raised, and since he filed the motion yesterday I have already spent a considerable amount of time looking into precedents and decisions which have been rendered in similar circumstances in the past because there is nothing particularly new about the procedure which is now proposed by the hon. member. I hesitate to use the word "attempted", but this procedure has been proposed previously in similar circumstances and decisions have been rendered by the Chair on such occasions. These are decisions that will have to be studied, particularly in view of the arguments advanced by the hon. member and his colleague, the hon. member for Peace River. I will be looking into the matter intently later today.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**CANADIAN CONSTITUTION**

TABLING OF DOCUMENT, "SECURITY OF INCOME AND SOCIAL SERVICES" TO BE PRESENTED AT CONFERENCE

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table copies in French and in English of a paper entitled "Income Security and Social Services", which the government wishes to submit for discussion at the Constitutional Conference to be held next week.

[English]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

MORTALITY RATE—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask the indulgence of the House to consider a matter I want to raise pursuant to Standing Order 43, which reads as follows:

A motion may, in case of urgent and pressing necessity previously explained by the mover, be made by unanimous consent of the House without notice having been given under Standing Order 42.

If I may have a moment to explain how pressing and urgent this matter is, before I ask for permission I would point out that it is something which should be on the conscience of every member of the House, which demands that we take immediate steps to correct a situation that was given some publicity

yesterday by the making public of a communication signed by G. Graham Cummings, Medical Liaison Officer, Medical Services Branch, for Dr. Wiebe, Acting Director General, Medical Services Branch, Department of National Health and Welfare, and dated October 20, 1969.

The communication was addressed to all regional directors, and the subject matter was "Changing Characteristics of Indian Mortality." If I may make two brief quotations from this stunning and shocking document, not to take them out of context but to give substance to what I claim is the pressing nature of this matter, perhaps they may convince the House that unanimous consent needs to be given. The first quotation relating to Indian mortality is:

(c) rising mortality in the third and fourth decades of life;

The second quotation is:

Indian infant mortality remains a matter of concern particularly in the provinces of British Columbia and the Yukon, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

The communication goes on to point out that an Indian woman of age 27 has less than one-fifth of the chance of an average Canadian of proceeding any farther through life, and an Indian man of the same age group has half the chance. Based on that brief explanation I would respectfully ask that the House give its consent for the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development to pursue this matter which is not contained within its current terms of reference. I therefore ask permission to move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North:

That the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development be empowered to inquire forthwith into the matter of health facilities available to, and the conditions of health of, the native Indian people of Canada and to report its findings and recommendations with all speed and dispatch.

● (2:20 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the motion proposed by the hon. member for Skeena. He has addressed himself to the fact that this motion, before it can be put to the House, requires the unanimous consent of the House. I shall inquire now whether there is such unanimous consent on the part of hon. members.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.