

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 7, 1971

The House met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Seventh report of Standing Committee on Public Accounts—Mr. Hales.

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HEALTH

SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to present a motion to the House concerning the scarcity of doctors. I rise pursuant to the terms of Standing Order 43 to ask the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion in connection with a matter of urgent and pressing necessity.

Canada has reached a crisis which, unless federal and provincial governments act more quickly than they have, will escalate to tragic proportions on a national scale. This crisis has been caused by Canada's failure to train enough doctors to meet the increasing surgical and medical needs of Canadians. Last year Canada trained 1,152 doctors to our high Canadian standards, but had to import 1,113, many of them not trained to our standards.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare told the House yesterday it is not clear that the provision of additional funds for medical schools for Canadian students is the right solution. Perhaps not, but in the name of those countless Canadians who, now and in the future, will suffer from this indecision, let us make an end to it.

I therefore propose to move, seconded by the hon. member for Perth-Wilmot (Mr. Monteith):

That the matter of the increasing shortage of doctors who are trained to Canadian standards be referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs with an instruction to inquire into the matter as quickly as is consistent with a thorough study and, from time to time, report back short-term and long-term solutions.

• (2:10 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the motion proposed by the hon. member for Simcoe North. Under the terms of Standing Order 43 this motion requires unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimity; the motion cannot be put.

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[Translation]

PENITENTIARIES

STATEMENT BY SOLICITOR GENERAL ON PENAL REFORMS

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House of Commons on the present situation of the federal penitentiary system, which pertains to persons convicted of sentences of two years or more, give an outline of our policy and explain the reforms that were undertaken a few months ago by the Penitentiary Service, and other reforms that are planned for the future.

I will start with some figures on the present situation.

First of all, as far as expenses are concerned, the government must spend about \$10,400 a year to keep an inmate in an institution while it costs only \$415 to the government if an inmate is on parole.

During the last month of June, 5,257 offenders were on parole across Canada. A study carried out by the National Parole Board of 2,663 inmates on parole showed that 2,078 or 78 per cent had a job. They earned, for that month only, nearly \$857,000. On the basis of such results and of money earned by the same persons for a whole year, this adds up to more than 10 million dollars and their income tax, both federal and provincial, has been estimated at nearly 1.3 million dollars.

Let us take a look now at the social angle. In Canada, close to one million persons have a criminal record. Each year, on average, 3,750 persons are admitted in our 36 federal institutions. At the present time, there are 7,270 inmates in our institutions, whose average age is 35 years and 80 per cent of them are recidivists.

These few figures point to the obvious conclusion that rehabilitation of offenders remains one of the major problems of our times. The present situation results from the fact that protection of society has received more emphasis than the rehabilitation of inmates.

For too long a time now, our punishment oriented society has cultivated the state of mind that demands that offenders, whatever their age and whatever the offense, be placed behind bars. Even nowadays, too many Canadians object to looking at offenders as members of our society and seem to disregard the fact that the correctional process aims at making the offender a useful and law abiding citizen, and not any more an individual alienated from society and in conflict with it.

Consequently, we have decided from now on to stress the rehabilitation of individuals rather than protection of society.