

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

short of physicians, particularly general practitioners. We would be in a real jam if doctors educated at the expense of poorer countries were to stop coming here. Is it fair to do this without compensation? Do we want a Canadian-oriented profession or do we not? I hope that the Minister of National Health and Welfare will take a good look at what I have said tonight.

Mr. Gaston Isabelle (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak this evening in reply to the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard). The hon. member is generally to be complimented on the tricky questions he asks in the House and he deserves a vote of thanks for giving the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) warning of his question. On this occasion, however, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was carried away in his enthusiasm to make the headlines and he failed to get his facts straight.

Mr. Rynard: I have them here.

Mr. Isabelle: But I have the answer. I quote from the hon. member's question:

In light of the fact that Canada is experiencing a drastic shortage of qualified physicians and has a much higher patient-doctor ratio than the United States—

This, Mr. Speaker, is the premise that the Minister of National Health and Welfare could not agree to and which prompted my misguided friend to accuse the minister of making a statement that is completely incorrect.

Mr. Rynard: It is according to the World Health Organization.

Mr. Isabelle: Well, Mr. Speaker, here are the facts: when the Minister of National Health and Welfare stated that Canada's doctor-patient ratio was one of the best in the world, he was correct.

Mr. Rynard: That is not right.

Mr. Isabelle: Our ratio is more favourable than developed countries such as Sweden, France, New Zealand, Australia, Austria, Great Britain, Japan and the Netherlands. In all fairness, I concede that West Germany, Austria, U.S.S.R. and Israel have done better than Canada. This fact in no way detracts from Canada's excellent standing.

The ratio of practising physicians to patients in 1970 in the U.S.A. was 675 to 1. In Canada, the ratio for 1970 was 685 to 1. A difference of ten, Mr. Speaker, or, expressed as a percentage, a difference of less than 1½ per cent. These facts speak for themselves. This House has more important work to do than spend its time debating the poor homework of the opposition.

● (10:10 p.m.)

Mr. Rynard: How about the OMA and the CMA? What have those bodies said?

Mr. Isabelle: That is not the question. Perhaps next time—I am sorry to say this—the hon. member will get

[Mr. Rynard.]

his facts straight and stop publicity seeking with such irresponsible statements.

Mr. Rynard: The minister himself admitted what has been alleged.

AGRICULTURE—DISCONTINUANCE OF DEFICIENCY PAYMENT TO WOOL PRODUCERS

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I raised this matter for debate at this time because I have not been able to secure any satisfactory explanation as to why the government has decided to discontinue the wool deficiency payment program. This comes at a time when wool prices are at their lowest levels in 20 years. Shearing and labour costs are up; freight rates have increased by 20 per cent. The cost of moving wool from the farm to the warehouse has doubled. Farm prices for wool at present are barely paying the costs of shearing and transportation.

On May 4 of this year representatives of the sheep and wool industry of Canada presented a brief to the government. I am sure the minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) is very familiar with the contents of that brief. I want to point out to him three of the reasons which they advanced for reinstating the wool deficiency payment program. They point out, first of all, that this program would provide lamp producers with an economic climate equal to that of the beef producers.

They point out, quite properly, that the beef producers in this country are protected against imports of beef from Australia and New Zealand on the basis of some three cents per pound, as compared with only one half of one cent per pound being provided with respect to lamb. They point out that the wool deficiency payment program helps to equalize the competitive position of producers of wool with that of other segments of the textile industry. They point out that man-made fibres enjoy a protection by way of duty of some 10 per cent ad valorem. Wool has no such protection.

The minister said on June 25, when I asked him a question about this, matter, that there was very little wool processing in Canada. There will not be unless there can be some guaranteed supply. The only way you will get a guaranteed supply is if the producers know that they will get a price that is somewhat close to the cost of production, plus providing a decent standard of living.

The third reason put forward by the wool producers is that the wool deficiency payment program helps to make Canadian sheep producers more competitive with the subsidized United States producers of wool and meat. They point out that the American producer enjoys an assured average of 72 cents per pound for wool. Without any deficiency payment, the Canadian producers will get 15 cents. That is a difference of 57 cents a pound. They point out that on the basis of ten pounds of wool being produced per ewe, annually, this represents \$5.70. On the basis that a ewe will last eight years, the sum is \$45.60. It is to that extent that the Canadian sheep producer is at a disadvantage compared with his counterpart in the United States.