

The Address—Mr. Poulin

here in Canada. May I modestly point out that poverty is a poor counsellor, that it is always in the seedbed of undeserved poverty that communism takes root most easily. Would not the expenditure of a few hundred million dollars to give the poor jobs which would preserve their dignity as free men be a way of making them happy and, as a result, of making them impervious to the come-hither of communism? It is only fair, I think, that we should ask ourselves this question.

And now let us look into another matter. I was very much interested in the remarks recently made in this house by the hon. member for Portneuf (Mr. Gauthier). In his capacity as a practising physician he dealt with a subject to which he has often addressed himself and which, to my mind also, is of great importance. As a matter of fact it is one which commends itself to both of us, since we are members of the same profession. I am speaking now of alcoholism amongst our people.

Is there anyone here who has any doubt whatever in regard to the importance of that problem in this country? Let us consider the statistics which I am about to quote; they give a comparative estimate of what the average Canadian spent towards the necessities of life, during the year 1948. I quote:

(Text):

According to the *Temperance Advocate* of October, 1949, the average Canadian spent in 1948:

Private and university education	\$ 5 00
Jewelry	5 50
Tobacco	24 00
Fuel	27 00
Medical and death charges	28 50
House furnishings and appliances	47 00
Alcoholic beverages	48 00

(Translation):

Those figures, as will be readily admitted, are worthy of consideration by any serious-minded person.

I believe that the hon. member for Portneuf is altogether right in requesting the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) to intensify his preventive medicine campaign by the inclusion of the fight against alcoholism.

The prevention of alcoholism is a matter of education at all levels: at home, at school and after graduation. I do not believe that either rules or the police can stop people from drinking. The experience of hundreds of years confirms my conviction. The following is a statement made a few weeks ago in Montreal by Dr. Adrien Plouffe, associate director of the health department of the city of Montreal:

[Mr. Poulin.]

The prevention of the manufacturing and of the sale of alcoholic beverages is a myth, a fabulous thing impossible of attainment. The prevention of alcoholism is a matter of education.

Mr. Speaker, no one is made virtuous by order in council, and long ago Cicero, the prince of lawmakers, said:

What good are laws without morals?

What good are laws without a willingness to respect them, and without the convictions necessary to accept their yoke? And where can we acquire such convictions, if not from education?

And such education must come from above. A Chinese proverb states:

If you start cleaning stairs at the bottom, they will always remain dirty.

To start teaching temperance to the lower classes is a good thing, I admit, but it is not enough. And in this connection, I wish to express my admiration and gratitude to an organization which has devoted itself to the fight against alcoholism through the simple practice of complete abstinence. This organization is known as the Cercle Lacordaire. It extends over all of the province of Quebec and to part of the provinces of New Brunswick and Ontario.

Having reached its tenth anniversary, it already has 90,000 members who, as human beings, are apt to make mistakes but who nevertheless bring their important, I would say essential, contribution to the organization of the fight against alcoholism. I might call this group a sort of people's university. It is far from being sufficient, however, and I would urge the minister of health to launch and support a wide educational campaign of temperance. Again I ask the hon. minister, who is apparently well disposed, to use all his influence in order that our Canadian universities may join, support and even lead the movement. Besides, it would be of little avail for our universities to pour into our communities hundreds of graduates, technicians, and scientists if these very communities are being gnawed by the cancer of alcoholism.

What is done elsewhere, and especially in the United States, could and should also be applied in Canada. Every Canadian university should scientifically teach the nature of alcoholism, its evils, its prevention and cure. Each medical faculty in Canada should have a clinic for the treatment of alcoholics, not only to cure drunkards, but also for the purpose of teaching how to prevent alcoholism. All our universities and schools of medicine have departments or clinics dealing with social