

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

who would have very little resistance to tuberculosis. Because such things as vitamin pills, fresh fruit and a balanced diet would really become something of a luxury in view of the size of the old age security pension at the present time.

The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Winters) can say what he likes about its being difficult for him to vote against an increase in the old age security pension, but we in this party did not vote against an increase in the old age security pension: We voted an opportunity for this government to take some action in this regard.

The question I raise of the increased incidence of tuberculosis is quite closely related to the difficult time that many older people are having. Dr. Grégoire quoted a study made in California in which every known case of tuberculosis was followed up. The study showed that 5 per cent of 100,000 arrested cases were actually still positive—and that in California, where the climate is much more salubrious than anywhere in Canada. I would wonder what sort of figures would be produced by the same sort of study among Canadians who are cases of arrested tuberculosis, particularly those in the elderly age group.

Mrs. Margaret Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to the remarks made by the hon. member and I should like to tell him that the department is reviewing continuously the indications of any increase in the number of tuberculosis cases in the country.

I am glad to inform the hon. member that a conference was held recently involving organizations and persons interested in this problem, as a result of the interest taken by the federal Department of National Health and Welfare, the Canadian Tuberculosis Association and the provincial ministers of health.

The Department of National Health and Welfare officials stated on behalf of the government at that conference that we are prepared to offer every assistance to the provincial departments of health, including the continuation of the federal tuberculosis grant, in efforts to combat the disease.

PENITENTIARIES—ST. VINCENT DE PAUL—
SUICIDE OF PRISONER

Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 24, Conrad Brunelle, a prisoner at St. Vincent de

[Mr. Johnston.]

Paul penitentiary, committed suicide by hanging himself with a belt. Mr. Brunelle was serving a three-year term for a series of armed robberies. He was also believed to be implicated in certain undertakings with Lucien Rivard and was considered a possible witness to other crimes.

This suicide has attracted special attention because Mr. Brunelle had attempted to cut his throat three months earlier but was stopped before he could complete the damage. That is why on Friday, March 25, I asked the Solicitor General whether he intended to undertake any investigation in this case.

It seems to me and to many others that something must be wrong with the administration of penitentiaries when a prisoner is left in a situation to commit suicide, having already survived a previous attempt made three months earlier. It seems strange that he should have access to materials that could be used for violent purposes either against himself or against others. One would have thought that a prisoner such as Brunelle would have been placed under special care and given special medical and psychiatric care.

We are presently debating the abolition of capital punishment. Some hon. members have suggested that if we abolish capital punishment society will be left unprotected. But I maintain, Mr. Speaker, we shall be left unprotected if we do not attack the real causes of crime and violence. It seems to me that one of those causes is the inadequacy of our prison reform and of our criminal rehabilitation systems. If we are going to prevent murder, we must get at the core of the problem.

Several radio stations and newspapers, including the *Montreal Gazette*, have raised the issue of this particular suicide. The *Montreal Gazette* on Saturday had an editorial with respect to it. Many of us believe that the government ought to conduct an investigation into this suicide, to find out how it could have taken place. Once this is done, we should see to it that those responsible are disciplined and that reforms are introduced.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Beaulieu (Saint-Jean-Iberville-Napierville): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the house should adjourn, because we do not have a quorum.