

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

ment is doing something to meet our housing needs. It is not good enough for the minister to say there will be intergovernmental co-ordination in the field of urban policy, without being prepared to lead the way. Only one government in Canada can lead the way, and that is the federal government. I hope the minister will bear this in mind and will lead Canada to a national urban renewal policy which is so necessary.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Pursuant to section 11 of Standing Order 58, the proceedings on the motion before the House are deemed to have expired.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

HEALTH AND WELFARE—POLICY ON BIRTH CONTROL AND FAMILY PLANNING

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, it is now several months since we learned that the Canadian government was jeopardizing the United Nations' program for family planning and birth control by withholding this country's promised financial support. Six nations were involved, and the entire sum was only \$15 million. At the same time we learned that the reason for this hold-up was that the Canadian cabinet was split on the matter, some members being favourable to the program of family planning and birth control, others being opposed to it.

I questioned the minister of external affairs in regard to when we could expect this conflict to be resolved and when Canada would come up with a policy of support for the program. In his reply the minister made it clear that until a domestic policy was reached there would be no consensus on an international policy. Again we have an example of what we heard today—further studies in depth, intense consideration,—deep cogitation, all of which adds up to complete inaction and stalemate.

As far as we know, the cabinet is still deadlocked in indecision. Frankly, I can see no good reason for this indecision. The Canadian people have pronounced themselves ready for a firm policy on birth control and family planning. A Gallup poll published just four days ago revealed that 67 per cent of the

[Mr. Skoberg.]

Canadian people, a solid two-thirds of the population, believe the ideal family size today is only two or at most three children. When two-thirds of the Canadian people agree on this issue, the government knows perfectly well that it is safe to go ahead with a policy of this kind. In my opinion, lack of action in face of such a majority decision is inexcusable.

The family Planning Federation of Canada has been trying unsuccessfully so far, to impress upon the government the need for leadership in this matter. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that as in so many other things the government is gracefully bowing away from this responsibility. In a recent brief to the Senate committee on poverty the Family Planning Federation of Canada pointed out the close and tragic connection between poverty and large families. As an example they cited a study of Vancouver multi-problem, poor families where such families were found to be larger than the Canadian average and where one-third of them had one child or more over 15 years of age living apart from the family for reasons of adoption, placement, emotional treatment or delinquency. In other words, in those large multi-problem, poor families the large family was also the one that incurred break-up and led to the community being saddled with extra expenses. Of course, the family itself was broken and scattered. The federation comments:

● (10:00 p.m.)

We know that the practice of family planning declines rapidly from the top to the bottom of Canada's socio-economic ladder. The poor are still having the babies, many of them unwanted babies.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, while some people may consider abortion a crime, the real crime is the problem of the birth of unwanted children—children who from the very moment of their birth are unwanted and condemned to wander in the world alone, uncared for and completely derelict from the beginning. What we need is more democracy in such matters; that is, the right for people on low incomes to have the knowledge and the means to plan and limit their families in the same way as those on higher incomes. Ottawa must take its part in providing funds for the establishment and maintenance of family planning clinics where they are needed across Canada.

If the government fails to act in this matter, if birth control is not made available to the people who need it, we shall see an increase in the already far too high incidence