

Social and Economic Security

medicine and work in outlying areas. Russia is aiming for a ratio of 3.6 doctors per 1,000 people. Canada, in the next decade, will be hard put to it to provide one practicing doctor, a general practitioner, for every 1,500 people. How can a doctor in Canada today carry the load he is expected to bear? He is drastically overworked, and anyone who visits a doctor's office or an emergency unit at a hospital can confirm this. Many of us, I suggest, should do this from time to time to find out what is going on. Because of overwork and consequent fatigue, a doctor in Canada today simply cannot deliver top medical services. Little Israel has the same number of doctors per capita as has Russia. France, United Kingdom, West Germany and the United States are all ahead of Canada.

If further proof of our neglect in providing the necessary number of doctors is needed, the World Health Organization estimated that the desirable ratio is one physician per 1,000 people. In these circumstances, is it not shameful that more than 600 students with the correct qualifications could not be admitted to our medical schools? If I were Minister of Health I would be taking a long look at that situation, because he and the government are failing to provide the number of doctors that the nation requires. But the government refuses to listen. Wailing and moaning about escalating health care costs, they are like the little boy who put his finger in the hole in the dyke. He tried to stop the leak, and this is what the government is doing. I wish the minister was in the House today. I know he has other duties. Time after time I have asked him to see what could be done. For the last four years I have asked that medical schools be run on a year-round basis, cutting the cost and increasing the number of doctors produced by shortening the course from six years to four years. The buildings are there, we have the teachers, we have everything required. Why is this not done?

Let me say this as a final plea. In the war against poverty, it must never be forgotten that preventive medicine has a very large part to play. If disease and illness are to be prevented, indispositions must be spotted at an early stage. It follows there must be sufficient doctors engaged in the practice of preventive medicine to check these people and prevent illnesses of long duration.

• (5:10 p.m.)

I have put the figures on the record. I hope the minister will read what has been said this afternoon by many of my colleagues and will take some action. Let him get his head out of the sand and remember that while he has been doing nothing people have been suffering and dying because of the inadequacy of our facilities for the practice of preventive medicine. This is a question that appeals to all hon. members because it is not a partisan one. It is a matter that affects people all across Canada. We must take some action to deal with the situation and the government has a part to play.

I well remember, as Your Honour does because you were here at the time, the cutbacks made in the health resources fund set up to build medical schools and centres to train doctors. To me this was a deplorable mistake, after the government had deceived the people by bringing in what it said was a full medicare plan. This the government has to answer for, as it must answer for the current

[Mr. Rynard.]

shortage of doctors. I do not put the blame for this on the federal government alone but on governments of all levels. Not only are we unable to provide sufficient doctors for the Canadian people; we steal and import them from other areas in the world where there are even less doctors than in Canada. This, in itself, is deplorable.

As a result of this debate this afternoon, I hope the minister and his government will examine what can be done. They have been considering the situation for a long time; let us hope the government now treats it as an emergency and does something.

[Translation]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, the motion presented in the House today by the Social Credit Party of Canada is extremely important because it brings forward solutions which would partially, if not totally, solve the social and economic issues that plague so many people and give responsible Canadians serious cause for worry.

Last year, on November 24—exactly a year ago yesterday—I spoke during the debate on Bill C-181 to provide temporary emergency powers in order to check terrorism in Canada and I said the following:

For many years, we have been warned by competent persons that if we did not reform our economic system, we would suffer from very serious social troubles. Only three years ago, American economists and sociologists, in a letter addressed to the President of the United States—

He is not just a nobody.

—stated that the first condition to avoid an unprecedented economic and social disorder would be to secure for each individual a guaranteed minimum income.

This cannot be a myth because those are the words of an economist warning the President of the United States that we must come to such a state of affairs, since the physical possibilities are there. In order to avoid disorder, he told the President:

Since our country is close to the United States, obviously the warning served to Americans applies also to Canadians. Monopolies, trusts, economic dictatorship, all these keep on ruling the roost—

What I said in 1970 applies also to 1971, and I resume the quotation:

under the benevolent eye of this government. Financiers keep on controlling this country's money supply and credit and thus, they distribute the lifeblood through the economic system whose life is in their hands.

There, Mr. Speaker, is the main cause of the disorders that we live through and which also create misery and unemployment, as well as a lack of confidence from the younger elements of our present society.

We must at least be realistic and listen carefully to what young people are saying. I have a dozen young people at home. I listen to their remarks and I worry for them since our large and beautiful Canada offers them no challenging future, a country where one should be able to breathe more freely. Also young people should be able to set up a home and look to the future with confidence. If young people want children, that is their business, but let them enjoy security and the prospect of a decent living.

Last year, again, I stated:

So far, government authorities have met this disorder by displaying police machinery. Certainly it is the duty of the state to