

Government Orders

I know this has been talked about but I want to talk about a specific angle. One of the many food banks in this country is Winnipeg Harvest, which has been active for several years and is having such difficulty from time to time in Winnipeg that it is running out of food. We all know the statistics about food banks. It is raised in Question Period regularly, to no avail. We know that in the research presented to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance by Professor Moscovitch of Carleton University of the 900,000 people on welfare in Ontario, the so-called gem, the cornerstone of our economy, over 400,000 of those are young people. You have to stop and think about what that means and how many of our cities are desperately trying to deal with thousands of people trying to get fed.

Concerning nutrition, 6 per cent of the babies in Canada have low birth weights, which is a major contributor to developmental disabilities. Low birth rate is inversely related to income status. A 10-year study on the effects of improving the diets of poor women examined the effects of supplementary food on a large group of pregnant women. On average their diet was supplemented by only 530 calories, including 32 grams of protein. The babies born to these women have the same current prenatal and premature death rate as babies born to richer families, and were significantly more healthy than other babies born in public clinics and previous babies born to the same mothers. In other words, it is nickels and dimes as the world goes to save these babies and to give them a good start in life.

The child mortality rate is twice as high among poor families as among families at the highest income levels.

I could go on and give a number of statistics this way, but all it does is demoralize me and I am sure it demoralizes the many members of the House who are interested in this issue. What we are trying to do is create a new climate in this country in which people can debate with us and can talk with us because they know that we understand their insecurities and their uncertainties.

Certainly all the time I was growing up, and I am sure I speak for other members of the House, Canadians never thought they would see the day when people in other countries would talk about children dying in this country because of malnutrition. Any of us who are familiar with the reserve life in this country would know that that it is a daily reality. Those of us who see inner city hospitals

such as the ones in downtown Winnipeg know just how tenuous life is for many young children. These conditions, for which they are not responsible, unless we step in they will never be able to change.

It is interesting when you go to projects in the inner city. I was at one on Saturday and it reminded me of just how little we know about the country. Here were people so pleased to be able to play a hockey game and have a place to change their skates and to have a hot dog. It is not fancy. What we are doing here is forgetting some of the basics as to what people need to have a good life. We have to get back to recognizing that unless people have those basics, their lives will crumble around them.

One of the more influential studies that came out on health care this summer, in June, was a study done by a Professor Thompson for HEAL, the health action lobby, entitled *Federal Support for Health Care: a background paper*. I thought this was one of the major studies that should be presented to Parliament because of the number of ways in which the federal government has undermined the program. I quote from Dr. Thompson's report:

It is clear that the recent federal measures have made it more difficult for the provinces to maintain current levels of insured and non-insured health services, let alone to develop new programs in the areas of disease prevention and health promotion.

Given the minister's remarks of a few minutes ago that he thought the provinces were not spending money appropriately, he may be interested in taking a look at how Professor Thompson came to these conclusions.

The information provided by Professor Thompson on the amount of money being withdrawn from the system is some of the most impressive data I have seen. The estimates concerning the EPF are supported by the HEAL group. If you start with the budget year of 1986-87 and go through to the budget year of 1995-96, the federal budget will have pulled \$42 billion out of our social, health and education areas. Think about it, \$42 billion being pulled from the system. That is having a devastating effect across the country. On the health side that includes \$30 billion and on the post-secondary education side, \$12 billion. We wonder why tuition fees are going up. We wonder why universities are not being removed. We wonder why our system is falling apart. We do not talk about the fact that we have just pulled \$12 billion out of the system.