

Social Security

cians came to realize that if they wanted to help suffering humanity, all they had to do was to take steps to prevent disease in all its forms.

When the system of sanitary units was created in my province, a great step was made towards curing the disabled and those who would have become invalids because of a lack of preventive medicine. I would not want to enumerate at length the causes of disability in general. Far too often our people were slow in accepting the views held by doctors with respect to preventive medicine.

I remember that during my first years in practice my patients would often say to me: "I hope you will not stick posters on my house to show that there is diphtheria inside." Thanks to preventive medicine these contagious diseases have all but disappeared. Nowadays everybody asks, not only to be preserved from the complications following badly treated eruptive ailments, but that the public in general be warned about them in order to reduce the danger of contagion. While on the extended calls which are the country doctor's lot I have often noticed that though there are some invalids who ask for public assistance, others refuse to bother those whom they believe to be, like the representatives of the people, kindly disposed and ready to help the seriously affected victims of poorly treated and misunderstood eruptive ailments.

The House of Commons, the hon. member for Terrebonne and all those who spoke on this motion deserve credit for their interest in the disabled, particularly those who are reluctant to ask for help, and for seeking to allow those people to find some measure of enjoyment in a life that has been more or less favourable to them.

I said that I did not intend to give the list of all the disabilities which may follow poorly treated or misunderstood eruptive diseases. May I be permitted to mention only kidney, eye and ear troubles, which may cause deafness or blindness at an early age. Everyone knows the discomfort attending arthritis. At the risk of drawing criticism from those who do not believe in this remedy, allow me to suggest a preventive remedy for arthritic troubles which are too often the cause of disabilities among our citizens. I refer to the more or less rigid abstention from alcoholic beverages.

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I shall not dwell on this subject today for I might be beyond the range of the motion before us.

Those who are entrusted with the care of public moneys—

Mr. Martin: You speak very well.

Mr. Gauthier (Portneuf): Thank you. Those who are entrusted with the care of public moneys—like the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) who always listens to us with kindness—fear that the number of pensioners may keep on increasing until one day the government will be unable to cope with all applications for pension.

However, in view of the enormous progress achieved in that field, through the help of the medical profession and of people outside the profession who understand the necessity of preventive medicine, the number of disabled will tend to decrease from day to day, from year to year. That is because the dangerous after-effects of various diseases will be avoided, thanks to the discoveries of research scientists.

I believe that the cost of such protection would not be as heavy as is thought at the present time. In any case, it would constantly decrease. I therefore beg the minister of national health and the government not to fear that too much money is involved. The house should support the motion of the hon. member for Terrebonne, and the government should introduce legislation which would make it possible, following the report on the survey which is still going on in connection with disabled people, to look with mercy on the lot of our invalids and hold out a helping hand in order to give them what is needed to lighten their burden at last.

I do not want to delay the passing of this motion. I only wanted to speak as a doctor, because I know that those who have access to the darkest recesses, farthest from the public gaze, can understand how much the disabled are hoping that the House of Commons and the federal government will act in that direction.

Mr. Azellus Denis (St. Denis): Mr. Speaker, I wish to join the previous speakers in supporting the motion of the hon. member for Terrebonne (Mr. Bertrand).