

The Address—Mr. Rynard

The other day, Mr. Speaker, I saw a paper that listed a series of questions which had been sent to and answered by an old age pensioner. The form was inquiring into his financial status. This particular couple had no money of their own and were living in an old home ten miles out in the country. They could stay there no longer because they were unable to drive or to afford a car, and consequently had to come into town. They sold the farm on which was situated a little farmhouse for which the buyer was paying so much a month. When they moved into town they had to pay a little more for a two-room apartment than they received as rental for the farmhouse. Having filled out the form they were then asked to pay for OMSIP, for hospital insurance. Thus their guaranteed income supplement went out the window.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is this proper treatment to give these people? The Pharisees in the new Testament used to do this. They said they followed the letter of the law; but let us not follow their example in this parliament.

I am also disturbed about the bureaucracy that is besetting provincial and municipal governments. We are being mentally and physically cruel to people we are supposed to honour and love. We have built up such a jungle of bureaucracy in our welfare work that we are on the point of helplessness.

● (5:00 p.m.)

For example, a man who had been eight years in a mental institution came to me not long ago. I am speaking from memory, but I think he had undergone several operations, two of them to his feet. He had a heart condition. After eight years of custodial care, when he was 50 years old he was turned out into the world to earn his living. What happened was inevitable. He couldn't cope. He came to my attention and on his behalf I contacted welfare workers who, under their regional set-up had to drive 25 miles in order to see him. One worker came out but could not find the man in question, for whom some grocery money and room rent was left. Groceries were not the crux of the problem, because on the day following the ex-mental patient was without a room to sleep in. He could not cope with his new world.

We telephoned the regional welfare worker, told him the story, and he came out to look the situation over. He said, "Why, this man will have to go into a county home." After that papers were sent, and we filled them in. The papers were sent down to the committee

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where they were processed and he was not accepted. We became involved with bureaucracy and more bureaucracy. Finally the papers were returned with the notation, "Unsuitable for this type of man", or some similar notation. The man is still on the street; he still has the same problems and nobody will look after him. He ran afoul of bureaucracy.

We are in a jungle of red tape where nothing happens and where taxes are increased to pay for that red tape. Bureaucrats run backwards and forwards piling up expenses for which we have to pay. I never thought that I should advocate a negative income tax to pull us out of the hole we are in, but I am approaching the point where I would advocate such a tax.

I expect many hon. members have heard of cases where people on welfare are better off than those who work for their pay cheques. That situation should not be permitted to exist. This situation applies not only in Canada but in the United States also. For instance, I have heard of cases where people in New York state living on welfare are better off than people in other parts of that country who are working for their living. It seems that we are all becoming helplessly entangled in bureaucratic red tape. The answer to the problem is that we must stop spending our money foolishly on increased bureaucracy. We must stop putting up unnecessary buildings or equipping necessary buildings with unnecessarily costly equipment. I have seen many hospitals, the equipment of which has become obsolete within ten years. The buildings needed altering, yet they were built to last from 25 to 50 years. Sometimes after the buildings had stood for 20 years it was necessary to tear them down. I have seen such complexes being destroyed. Canada cannot afford that type of foolishness when our people are short of housing. Lots of work is waiting to be done in the just society, Mr. Speaker.

On July 1 the government brought in medicare, and I have often wondered how the plan will operate when one considers the scarcity of doctors. Saskatchewan is participating, as is British Columbia. I understand that Nova Scotia is to come in soon.

Mr. Crouse: Next year.

Mr. Rynard: And the government is going to blackmail every province into entering the plan, whether the province has the money for it or not.