

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

This is not an isolated experience. We have experience with regard to the shutdown of a textile plant in Cornwall, and with regard to Canadian General Electric. It appears to be a weekly occurrence. Surely the time has come when we should incorporate the principle set forth in the Freedman report whereby if a company decides to make a major change in its operations, this is a negotiable principle. The company and union officials should get together to determine whether the company should continue, and adequate notice should be given if it is not. Surely the time has come to do this. I hope the Minister of Labour will stop swinging his shillelagh at women and start thinking about the workers in Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It being ten o'clock, it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 58(11) the proceedings on the motion are considered to have expired.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

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

INDIAN AFFAIRS—DISCONTINUANCE OF SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, on April 15 I directed the following question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien):

Is it the policy of his department that all school lunch assistance, including lunches in public schools, milk, lunch tickets, and lunches prepared by lunch committees be discontinued as part of the government's austerity program?

Mr. Speaker ruled that my question was not in proper form. Because it is an important matter, I put it down for debate at this hour. My question arises as a result of a letter written by the district school superintendent of education in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Gerald V. Closs. The letter is dated Manitowaning, January 26, 1970. It is addressed to the parents of children attending schools on Manitoulin Island. I quote from the letter as follows:

All school lunch assistance will be discontinued. This includes lunches in the federal schools, milk, lunch tickets or money for high school students, and lunches prepared by lunch committees.

[Mr. Gilbert.]

High school students on educational assistance will no longer receive travel warrants, personal or clothing assistance. Although this may create a hardship for a few people, parents will have to assist students with their family allowance cheques, if we are to have sufficient money to pay for their room and board and tuition. Parents should also know that most students away from home have more money than they really need according to the reports of our counsellors.

We must realize, Mr. Speaker, that we are here dealing with a group of people who to a large extent are on welfare a large part of the year. It is not proper to suggest that children away from home have more money than they need. To suggest that Indian parents on Manitoulin Island should begin to pay for these basic services is an indication of the social philosophy of this government.

• (10:00 p.m.)

The idea of a just society has collided with the measures which the government believes must be implemented to restrain spending. The people who will be most adversely affected by this policy of restraint are precisely those who can afford it the least, in this case the Indian people of Manitoulin Island. It may be we shall be told that this is not the general policy of the government. I hope we will. But even if this is true only of the Indian children living on Manitoulin Island, I think the situation is a disgrace. I quote from a press release issued March 4, 1970, by a group who call themselves The Voice of Manitoulin Women. It reads in part:

The Voice of Manitoulin Women has also discovered that the elementary schools on the Manitoulin Island Indian Reserve are understaffed, and there are no remedial teachers available. There are approximately 1,000 pupils, for whom there is one librarian who has to divide her time among three schools, one of which is some five miles distant from the other two. The provincial standard is one qualified librarian for every 300 pupils.

Later, it reads:

Parents on the reserve have been told by Indian Education Services that they must assume financial responsibility for their teenagers' high school education beyond \$800 per year.

I point out that the cost of educating children in the high school on the mainland is substantially more, in the neighbourhood of \$2,400 a year. The department assumes no responsibility for the extra amount and the parents will have to pay the difference amounting to \$1,600 a year. Obviously this will be impossible. So in effect the department is saying to the parents on the island, "Your children cannot go to a high school on