

When sickness comes the wealthy, or moderately so, are able to provide for themselves adequate and satisfactory medical service, and when the poor become ill they are able to find such service in the public wards of the hospitals, where gratuitous service is amply given by the doctors appointed to the hospital staffs. But for those who in respect to wealth, constitute the large middle class, the problem is a very difficult one. These, if hospital treatment is required, do not want to go to the public wards and accept gratuitous service, but to enter as private patients, or even semi-private, and become chargeable with hospital maintenance and all extras besides special nursing and medical or surgical attendance, is cause for a financial blow from which many do not easily recover.

Assuredly some re-adjustment of present plans is necessary. It may be that some limited form of State Medicine will soon be evolved whereby medical men will be relieved of the load which they have willingly carried for so many years, of providing gratuitous service for the public ward patients in hospitals, and whereby individuals with incomes less than certain fixed amounts, according to various conditions of living, will be afforded adequate medical service at standardized hospital rates and fees for nursing and medical attention which will be, at least in part, an obligation of the State to be provided for through general taxation.

Within easy memory there was a time when it required some persuasion to get a patient to go to hospital for treatment. Now because all prejudice against hospitals has disappeared and their suitability is generally recognized, and because of domestic and other appertaining conditions it is taken for granted that as far as possible all major and many minor surgical cases should be treated in hospitals; also that many medical cases should be likewise managed.

Throughout the province many hospitals have been established in recent years and largely through the philanthropic spirit of benefactors and local citizens. In many instances municipal assistance has been withheld until the hospital has proved itself indispensable to the community. More recently a commendable policy of hospital support has been manifested by the Provincial Government and it appears likely that such support will be extended in the immediate future.

In the larger centres of population the hospital problem is much more difficult than in the smaller ones. In Toronto, the centre with which one is most familiar, the hospital situation is very serious in respect to availability of accommodation and particularly for other than public ward patients.