

We have also discussed during the afternoon what I might call public health. If this resolution refers to public health, then there is no great necessity for its being on the order paper, because public health work is carried on in all the provinces of this dominion and there is a department of public health in the federal field. Public health work I understand to mean the intervention of the state in such matters as preventing the importation of disease from foreign countries, for which we have set up our quarantine regulations, also the state looking after the sanitary arrangements of the people, for which we have our municipal laws and regulations. It includes further the intervention by the state, as in the case cited by the hon. member for Portneuf (Mr. Gauthier), namely, the health units in Quebec and in other provinces, which with the assistance of philanthropists have developed a system whereby health services are furnished gratis to a very large proportion of the population, the portion which needs it most, as my hon. friend said. There are food regulations which also come under the heading of public health, and which we have had from time immemorial. It is a matter of some local pride for me to say that three hundred years before the United States of America were forced to pass regulations regarding food by the vitriolic pen of the well known novelist who wrote *The Jungle*, we in the city of Quebec had regulations governing the slaughtering of animals for food. Even in community effort to look after disease, at the beginning of the eighteenth century there was in Montreal a Doctor Bouchard who carried out a plan somewhat similar to that outlined by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth), and on payment of a certain fee undertook to look after the health of certain of his fellow citizens.

I believe the idea now being generally studied throughout the world, and the one which possibly is the basis of this resolution, is that public health is not sufficient. We must go a good deal beyond that and look after the health of the individual, as differing from that of the community to which I just referred. We must even go beyond the sphere of action of dealing with the communicable diseases, and go into the very homes of the people and there deal with the individuals with respect to both preventive and curative medicine.

There is no doubt in my mind that there is growing throughout Canada and, in fact, every other country, a greater consciousness of the responsibility of the state towards its citizens in matters of public health. There

[Mr. Power.]

is no doubt whatever that the economic, social and moral structure of the state to a large extent depends on the health of its citizens. It is coming also to be believed in Canada and elsewhere that one of the fundamental and most important functions of government is to care for and preserve the health of its citizens. There have been many schemes and many projects submitted to various legislatures in Canada. Some of them are perhaps impossible of present realization, on account of financial difficulties; some met with local difficulties, others with jurisdictional difficulties, and it would be apparent that even were we immediately to decide to embark on one or another of these schemes, we would at once be faced with the question of priority.

For instance, I do not think there is any doubt that the greatest need for medical care to-day in Canada would be in the rural areas. But there might be some discussion as to whether or not it is the extremely indigent people who need looking after, from the standpoint of physical well-being, or those whom we might call the lower middle class, the wage earner on the smaller salary. On the other hand, if health insurance were to be adopted, in all likelihood it would be the wage earner on the small salary rather than the indigent person or the person engaged in agricultural pursuits, who would be the first to benefit.

Possibly, without going into an elaborate discussion of the various schemes, I might best make my contribution to the debate by laying before the house such information as I have been able to obtain, through the officers of the department, with respect, first, to health insurance and, second, to state medicine, as it exists in certain other countries.

Health or sickness insurance, whichever term you wish to use, has been in existence for a very long time. At first the intervention of the state was not required. During mediaeval times, in the middle ages, the guilds, which were corporations made up of employers and employees had, as one of their principal functions, the looking after of the health of the persons composing those guilds. As time went on, we find that during the French revolution the guilds were abolished. Later on, the industrial revolution came along, and they no longer had their place in the social structure of the day which, as is well known, did away with the old friendly relations which existed between master and journeyman. That system made of the employee more of a machine than a working companion. If we can believe what we read of those days, the situation of the worker in industry at that time was most deplorable.