

I must say that in Canada the health of the people is being looked after pretty well. In the earliest days the municipalities provided the small amount of care needed for indigents, and the system has progressed from that time on. Preventive medicine has been carried on by the municipalities and the provinces, and that is being looked after exceedingly well. One hon. gentleman who spoke the other night rather questioned our policy in Canada in regard to health, but statistics prove that in this regard Canada compares very favourably with any country in the world. It has been shown that any controllable disease, such as diphtheria, typhoid fever and tuberculosis, is definitely on the down grade in this country, because the people have been taught how to look after themselves, and for that reason our record is good. Some people seem to delight in saying that the health of our people is not being looked after and is becoming poorer, but as a matter of fact it is being looked after exceedingly well. The other night the hon. member for St. Boniface made a point which is absolutely true, when he said that the people are receiving care, though the doctors may not be getting their pay. Everyone who has taken any interest in the question knows that. In my own county no one has to go without the treatment he needs, either operative or medical, and I think that applies to a great extent all over Canada. I may tell the hon. member for St. Boniface that the government are seized of the necessity of giving this matter the most thorough study, of trying to correlate the various efforts being made along these lines, and of associating themselves with the various agencies working towards this end. I think, as the hon. member thinks, the time will come before long when steps in this direction will have to be taken, but it must be a gradual process.

Mr. HOWDEN: I very much appreciate the remarks of the minister; I am glad to hear him speak as he has, and I agree with almost everything he has said. I do believe, however, that for a number of years the subject has not received the serious attention and thought it has deserved, though now the public is making a general demand for medical service, and when the public makes a general demand for anything it usually gets what it wants in a comparatively short time. What I think is neither here nor there, but, as the minister said a moment or two ago, in many parts of the country, certainly in that part from which I come, people are getting a very fair medical service. They are getting the services of medical men and

[Mr. Sutherland.]

the drugs they require whenever and wherever they require or demand them; but as I have said before, the whole cost is falling on the municipalities which are struggling to keep their heads above water. As a consequence the medical men are not being paid for this service. I am not holding a brief for the medical men. I simply say that if the medical men are rendering good service—and I believe they are giving the people throughout the west and very largely throughout Canada a very satisfactory service—I think they ought to be paid a reasonable fee for it. If the fees now being paid by the municipalities could in some manner be augmented, then the people could have the doctors of their choice, and could have hospitalization whenever they required it. The difficulty with regard to the personal element, to which the minister referred, would be eliminated; people would have their own doctors and those doctors would receive reasonable remuneration for their services. The municipalities cannot do this alone; the little, struggling municipalities in western Canada can no more perform this service unaided than they can fly. I am appealing to the minister to-night because even with the assistance of the provinces the municipalities can barely perform the necessary services. I believe we require the joint action and interest of the three authorities, federal, provincial and municipal. If we can get that joint action we will have a satisfactory, non-compulsory system of state medicine which will be very much to the benefit and advantage of the Canadian people.

Mr. SPENCER: The minister made a statement a few moments ago that I cannot let pass without at least questioning it. He will correct me if I am wrong, but I understood him to say that the health of the people is being looked after exceedingly well. I have no doubt the medical profession do their best, but may I suggest that among the people requiring medical attention there are three main types. The first class consists of those who can well afford to pay for medical aid. The second class is composed of those who have not the means to pay and who therefore usually are looked after by charity, in most cases with the help of the municipality, either urban or rural. But there is another very large class between those two, composed of people who also suffer but who do not want to go on charity. At the same time they cannot afford to pay to have themselves looked after, and as a result they go to the doctor only at the last moment. The doctors must know this very