

By Hon. Mr. Schaffner:

Q. I have read of cases where those who are in need do not have to pay it all,—in cases where they are indigent; they do not have to.—A. They do not have to; the State pays it in Wisconsin, in regard to indigent cases. A rather interesting thing appears in regard to the operation of the Act in Wisconsin: While the State is prepared to give laboratory tests free of charge, the physicians have not taken advantage of it. Although physicians have taken advantage of these free laboratories for cases in their general practice, they have not submitted the applicants for marriage to laboratory tests; the answers received would indicate that. Again it shows that if we were to make it compulsory in Canada to have laboratory tests in all cases there would be an uproar on the part of the Canadian people. We might have such legislation in 20 years time, but it would be necessary to have a milder bill that would be reasonably successful as a fore-runner.

We will go on to see what these physicians in Wisconsin had to say: Of the physicians who expressed themselves in Wisconsin concerning the value of the law—

By the Chairman:

Q. Pardon me, but did you say 1,000 Doctors replied?—A. 1,110 doctors gave evidence.

Q. 1,110?—A. Yes. We find of that number that 63·8 per cent were generally favourable and the others unfavourable. That means that after the law had been in operation for 12 years the majority were favourable. Most of the doctors who were unfavourable said they should have more than \$2 for medical examination. 76·4 per cent of all the physicians giving comments stated that they made a careful clinical examination in every case applying for a certificate, although the law did not require it. The law said in those cases where physicians thought it was necessary,—but 76 per cent made examinations as a routine measure with every case. I think that is a splendid tribute to the profession of Wisconsin.

The conclusions at the end of this book I think are of very great interest, because they are written by a man connected with the Russell Sage Foundation who was only looking for facts. But before reading the conclusions I would ask permission to read what the state health officer of Wisconsin thought of the law—am I taking too much time?

The CHAIRMAN: No, no.

The WITNESS: It is something like the matter of sterilization. Theories may be of little value. It is of value however to know what has been done and to know the experience of those who have tried it, and I think the same principle may apply here. This is what Dr. Harper, the state health officer of Wisconsin said:

“ I am confident that a large percentage of physicians make quite a thorough physical examination. Undoubtedly there are some who still simply ask a series of questions and rely upon the answers of their patients. This latter class, however, is a small minority. When a physician is discovered who has signed a certificate without an examination, the State Board of Health endeavours to show him the necessity for being more careful. The average physician makes a reasonable local examination, covering the lymphatic glands and throat, and all parts of the body on which there may be or may have been sores resulting from a venereal disease. In practically all cases where an applicant admits a previous infection or where the physicians' examination reveals evidence of infection, laboratory tests are applied. In the main the law has proved of inestimable value.”