

*Supply—Health and Welfare*

the government is doing along these lines. I have another matter concerning old age pensions, but I notice there is an item dealing with old age security and I shall bring it up then.

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Chairman, I should like to speak for a few minutes about the alarming shortage in Canada of dental surgeons and technicians, a shortage which is growing worse every year and which I think if allowed to continue will have an adverse effect upon the general health of all Canadians.

I have before me a letter written a few months ago by the dean of the faculty of dentistry, University of Toronto, Mr. Roy G. Ellis. I had asked him if he would give me what information he could about this matter. We had talked about it several times and he sent me a comprehensive brief he had prepared upon it. I should like to quote from that brief because I think it outlines the situation most clearly. He states:

The ratio of dentists to the population in Canada on January 1, 1954, was 1 to 2,790. In the United States it was 1 to 1,700. In 1947 the ratio in Canada was 1 to 2,510, so that the situation has become worse in the past seven years. The basic reason is that the Canadian dental schools are lacking the physical accommodation to increase their annual output. The situation will continue to grow worse, and a further contributing factor in the years ahead will be directly related to the high percentage (approx. 50 per cent) of the members of the profession who are over 50 years of age.

He goes on to say:

In 1954, the Canadian dental schools graduated 179 dentists for a population of 15 million, while the United States graduated approximately 3,000 dentists for 160 million people.

That means that last year in Canada we graduated 12 dentists per million of population whereas in the United States they graduated 19 per million of population, just over one and a half times the ratio in this country. Mr. Ellis goes on to say:

The truth is that the dental associations have been pointing to the urgency of this problem for many years. Reference has been made to the shortage of dentists at every annual meeting of the board of governors of the Canadian Dental Association since 1949. At the meeting in 1953, the following resolution was adopted and given wide publicity:

"Whereas a definite shortage of dental personnel exists in Canada, and

Whereas the present teaching facilities in Canada are inadequate to graduate adequate personnel to meet the need of the public for dental services, and

Whereas the responsibility for the provision of increased teaching facilities in dentistry rests upon university and government authorities, therefore be it

Resolved that this association use all available means to further the securing of expansion of teaching facilities for the training of dentists and dental hygienists in order to provide adequate dental service to meet the need of the people."

I should like to refer now to a brief which was submitted to the House of Commons and Senate committee on health which sat in Ottawa on March 22 this year. In this brief the Canadian Dental Association state:

The crux of the matter is that the training facilities for producing graduates in dentistry are the same today as when the population was nine million.

And again:

During the last ten years four times the number of applicants have applied to study dentistry as could be admitted to the existing schools.

And again:

It is possible to greatly enlarge the number of the public served by the fully trained dentist through the introduction of personnel known as dental hygienists. These girls are trained, in the comparatively short period of two academic years, to perform the most time-consuming operations in the dental office now done by the dentist. Statistically it has been proven that the trained dental hygienist saves the dentist over 40 per cent of his time. The result is that the dentist serves a much greater number of people at reduced cost to the patient. The availability of this type of personnel would largely relieve the present shortage of dentists and a real demand exists for this personnel.

But in spite of our recommendations and efforts only one small limited course for dental hygienists has been established in this country. Of necessity these girls must be trained in dental schools. The present schools do not have facilities. Like in the case of increasing training facilities for dentists, the difficulty has been financial.

Accusations are cast at times that the dental profession, as a matter of fact all professions, operate a closed shop. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is true that standards for qualifications exist for the protection of the public. The only limitation for qualified applicants is the limited facilities for teaching.

Toward the end of his brief Dean Ellis of Toronto university says:

If the necessary funds are provided for the proposed new dental school at the University of Toronto, it will be possible to increase the output to 120-125 graduates a year or an increase of 30 per cent for Canadian graduates. Dental hygiene classes would be increased 400-500 per cent. Extensive research and postgraduate facilities are planned. The other dental schools in Canada look to this school to carry the major share of this responsibility.

The proposed new building is more than a provincial project. With 30-35 per cent of the students registered in this school coming from provinces other than Ontario, it is truly a Canadian project. The premier of the province of Ontario has set aside \$1 million for the new dental college and has pledged to match dollar for dollar any grant the dominion government may make toward the project, which it is estimated will involve a total of \$4-4½ million.

In concluding Mr. Ellis gives the following summary of this situation:

- (1) Dental disease is a major national health problem.
- (2) There is a critical shortage of dental personnel to deal with dental disease.
- (3) The dental profession, itself, has been urging action for many years.
- (4) The children in rural areas are suffering as this problem is neglected and grows more acute.