

State Medicine

comprehensive insurance scheme which will adequately protect the worker and his family against all the social risks.

When any movement is led by such countries, especially by a progressive people like those of Northern Ireland, we can sit up and take notice.

There are two outstanding arguments for state medicine; first, there is the urgent need of those who are ill, and, second, the doctor. I will treat both these points in a general way. There is vital need for some socialization of medical services, in the first place because of the serious shortcomings that exist under the present system in spite of the great advance in the science of medicine, resulting in poverty and often in death; and, secondly, because the prevention and cure of disease have by no means kept pace with the advancement in medical science. There is a third factor to be considered, however, and that is the maladjustment of medical science to public need. The inadequacy of medical services to the needs of the public is shown very clearly in the lack of both personnel and funds contributed to various public health agencies. In private medicine there is an insufficiency of personnel, inaccessibility to equipment, and inability among the masses to pay the cost of medical care.

As most hon. members know, the wage of the average worker or head of a family is about \$986 a year, there being five persons in the average family; in other words, the monthly salary of the average worker is about \$80, and this has to maintain five persons. Obviously some essentials must be cut to the very bone. Doctors are not called till the very last moment; they are called only when it is absolutely necessary. Many ailments appear in later life as the result of malnutrition attributable to lack of proper care for mothers during the developmental period of child life. Captain MacPherson tells us that there is great loss of life because people are unable to call the doctor when necessary; they cannot pay the bill. There can be improvement only by the organization of medicine to serve the needs of society. Private medicine has failed to some extent. Medical equipment is insufficient and in some instances there is lack of confidence. As a result, those who are ill resort to other cures. Some have turned to Christian Science, and here I would say that if Christian Science would only use all the means at its disposal, all the things that have been found by medical science to be of benefit, and would then leave everything to the Great Physician, it would accomplish much good. There are others who

[Mr. McIvor.]

apply to druggists for remedies. Perhaps some of us have been guilty of this. But the druggist cannot prescribe, because he cannot diagnose properly. Again, others use patent medicines.

The cost of medical service has assumed such alarming proportions that adequate medical care can be paid for only by those who are wealthy. The very poor can also be assisted, but the great middle class can get no help. The high cost of medicine is due largely to the cost of hospital and nursing services, though these in themselves are not exorbitant. The upkeep of hospitals and the cost of all the equipment used are not excessive, and everyone knows that nurses are not overpaid.

There has been great progress in medical science, especially in the field of obstetrics, and yet it is found that in Canada from twenty-five to thirty-five per cent of the mothers in childbirth are unattended. Again, the doctors are not fairly paid under the present system; only a few earn large incomes. The doctors with whom I have discussed this question are all in favour of state medicine, with the exception of those who have first-class practices—the \$100 or \$150 a day men. A great deal of free work is done for the poor in hospitals and clinics without remuneration, and the doctors do more of such work than any other professional man, except the clergyman. Let me give you an outstanding example. Doctor Riddell of St. Boniface told me once that in 1925 the hon. member for that constituency (Mr. Howden) had \$75,000 coming to him from the community and that he would never get it. This is not fair to the profession. To ask a doctor to go out at all hours of the night on some of the most urgent cases and not to have him paid is most unfair. The efforts of the medical men to remedy the situation are insignificant. Voluntary clinics have been established but there are not enough of them to be of general service. The control of medicine by the state would offer a remedy. Medical service provided for the community should include provision for scientific diagnosis and treatment of all its members in need of medical care. It should provide for the adequate financial remuneration of doctors and should encourage health education and the control of disease. This can be provided by state medicine, whereby the work of all agencies in the community for public medicine and for preventive and curative medicine could be properly controlled. These agencies can be utilized to make the benefits of modern medicine available to all the people. By some system of