

Suppose that I, as a health officer or a doctor in Alberta, discover smallpox near the boundary line between Alberta and Saskatchewan. Under the present laws I go and quarantine the house. The people do not want to be in quarantine, and they cross over into Saskatchewan. I cannot follow them; I am absolutely powerless; all I can do is to wire to the provincial health department at Regina that one or more cases of smallpox have escaped from Alberta and gone into Saskatchewan. The Alberta authorities have to send officials out to try to hunt them up. The consequence is that from 24 to 48 hours are lost, and these people have mingled with people in Saskatchewan and have spread smallpox broadcast all over that province. I have been a health officer in Alberta ever since 1890, and I can see and fully appreciate the weakness of the present system in regard to health matters.

On paragraph c—immigrants and seamen and administration of marine hospitals:

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK: Is it the intention to take away from the Marine Department the work that they have been doing in connection with seamen and marine hospitals?

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Oh, no.

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK: I understand they have the whole matter in hand at the present time.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: The Department of Health could exercise a supervision as to the manner in which the service is administered. For instance, at the present time we have eight or ten departments administering, all within their own spheres, duties concerning public health. I think it will be generally conceded that if there were some supervision by a competent central authority over those varied spheres of medical activity, it would be in the interest of the public. Something of that kind might be worked out, but it is not intended to centralize within this new department that which is closely allied with the essential duties of another department and clearly belongs to it.

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK: But the question arises in that case, why is it necessary to specify "seamen and the administration of marine hospitals"? Would not the power of the department generally apply, as my honourable friend has said, to every department?

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: It might be regarded as desirable that that should be

Hon. Mr. DE VEBER.

done. The Bill gives the authority, but it does not necessarily follow that the authority will be invoked and the duties taken from another department. It is just as well, though, to have the authority to do it, in the event of our wishing to centre the work in this new department.

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK: It might really result in this department taking over the duties that have been performed by the Marine Department?

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Yes.

Hon. Mr. DANIEL: I think there is no doubt that, as regards the administration of marine hospitals, it is the intention to transfer that to the new department.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Possibly.

Hon. Mr. DANIEL: There is no doubt about that, I think, because I have heard to that effect.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: I did not know.

Hon. Mr. DANIEL: And so with regard to the treatment of seamen.

Paragraph c was agreed to.

On paragraph d—supervision of railways, boats, ships, and all methods of transportation:

Hon. Mr. DANIEL: Honourable gentlemen, I would like to know something more about that. At the present time, in my own city and province, under provincial authority, local boards of health have full control with regard to railways, boats, ships, and anything else that comes within their local sphere. Is it the intention when this Bill becomes law that the Department of Health of the Dominion should take actual charge of all these things, which of course would take them out of the hands of the local health authorities? Unless it is clearly understood, there is a possibility, a probability in fact, that between two stools the whole administration will fall to the ground and that these matters will not be attended to at all. At the present time, if there is an infectious disease on a railway train, our local board of health takes charge of the train and sees that it is quarantined and looked after.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: I refer my honourable friend to paragraph a. We could not, nor do we desire to supersede the authority of the municipal, or provincial bodies, where that authority is be-