

effort. This incidentally is a grave and undeserved reflection on present whole-time officers in the medical and scholastic professions. The reflection is deserved in individual instances, and these instances in the aggregate may bulk somewhat largely, but in my judgment they form but a small proportion of the total. In these instances security of tenure of office reduces effort and short of this may and sometimes does stereotype and render static present methods of work.

But it cannot be said that the intellectual stagnation and moral lethargy, when they occur in officials, are their special possession. With these occasional accompaniments of a too sure livelihood may be compared the medical work of an occasional private medical practitioner in a poor district, his hurried interviews with his patients, his too frequent treatment of many patients without diagnosis, the pile of weekly medical journals which one can see unopened on his table, and the inability to attend the meetings of medical societies, still less to cultivate post-graduate work.

I believe that a regularly paid medical man, one who accepts a fee for regular service, is probably just about as dependable as the man who is driven to death with overwork and harassed by underpay, and I should be very much disposed to think that if such a man were given a living wage he would render very much better service to the state and to his fellow man.

I cannot possibly hope to conclude on this occasion; I shall have to wait until another time to say all that I have to say on the subject.

Mr. J. S. WOODSWORTH (Winnipeg North Centre): There is no doubt whatever that the previous speakers have voiced the opinion of the vast majority of the people of Canada. I am sure we all appreciate the frank and forcible presentation of the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Howden). I may say in passing that though he may not know he is a socialist, I have rarely heard the socialist case presented with greater force than he has put it before us this afternoon. It is a strange thing that though the majority of the members of the house are in general agreement on the desirability of much greater health service for the people of the country, nothing very much is likely to happen as a result of this debate this afternoon. It is passing strange that that should be so. In matters of this kind we in this house are, after all, little more than an academic debating society.

Mr. BENNETT: Hear, hear.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: We all recognize to-day that something in the nature of state medicine is desirable, first of all on humanitarian grounds, and, in the second place, on the grounds of economy and efficiency; yet there are certain obstacles that stand in the

way, obstacles that are hardly understood by the general public outside, obstacles that make a great part of the work of the house quite futile.

I am very glad that this question has been introduced by a Liberal. The Liberals here have a majority of some one hundred members, and if they desired to do so they could give us action along this line to-morrow. There is no doubt about that, and yet nothing happens.

There are probably two difficulties that will be brought forward if we get to the point where the government must speak on this matter. One difficulty is the question of jurisdiction. The British North America Act will be brought out, as it always is, and we shall be told very clearly that this is a provincial matter and that the dominion government can do nothing about it. The British North America Act is for the government a very present help in time of trouble, that is, whenever action is required. And if, by any chance, the British North America Act is not sufficient, we have, of course, the financial difficulties, and it will be said to be inopportune at this particular time for the government to take action. Is that not really the situation in which we find ourselves?

Only this morning my attention was called to a passage in the Edmonton Bulletin in which the new Liberal candidate, Mr. R. C. Marshall, was said to have sounded the keynote of a progressive Liberal program. Among other things he advocates old age pensions for all requiring them at fifty-eight years of age or sixty years at most, and "adequate enough to assure a decent standard of living and not a mere pittance." He wants to make it possible for older men and women to get out of industry, knowing they will be comfortable in their declining years, and make room for the younger generation, and so on. I have no doubt that Mr. Marshall would like to get some votes, and this is something that is popular throughout the country. If a candidate can tell people that they are likely to get pensions at sixty, or better still at fifty-eight, he may get some votes. But I do not believe that this kind of statement is made merely for vote-getting; it is made because the people generally feel the need for social services of this kind.

What the hon. member for St. Boniface said of the ordinary man is quite true. Not only can he not get help in time of sickness, but a great many people as they approach the end of their lives, or at least the end of the working period of their lives, are in a state of great anxiety about the means of supporting themselves in their declining years. These