

to speak of refers more to his department than to that of agriculture. I see this is a contribution to empire bureaux. I was wondering why the government has eliminated from the estimates the grants for health in Canada. For instance, the Canadian Social Hygiene Council used to have a grant of \$20,000, which is entirely eliminated from the estimates, and another grant which has been eliminated is one of \$100,000 to the provinces to help in the fight against venereal disease. We have just been talking about the health of animals. While that is all right, we ought to be just as much interested in the health of the citizens of Canada. I understand the Prime Minister has said that this is a provincial matter. If that is correct it is another direct turn-about-face on the part of the government, because, speaking in this house on March 3, 1930, to a resolution with respect to extending our activities in the matter of health, the present Prime Minister had this to say:

There is, however, a field in which the province may not, it seems to me, properly function, and that is the creation of national wealth by ensuring the health of the Canadian people. Some one has said, "A nation's health is a nation's wealth." We as a parliament are concerned in the health of the Canadian people as a whole. To the extent to which men are able to labour, free from disease, we have added to the national wealth; to the extent which citizens by studying preventive medicine obtain knowledge, from clinics and other methods, for which the nation might well pay, we have added to the national wealth of Canada.

At the conclusion of his remarks the present Prime Minister said:

Let us approach this problem not as a problem of jurisdiction, not as a problem as to whether or not under the British North America Act, it is a matter of provincial responsibility; let us look upon it as a national problem. This parliament has the power to appropriate any part of the national revenue for any purpose for the interest of Canada as a whole. Make the appropriation not for provincial purposes, but to the provinces to carry forward a great national undertaking—the ensuring of the health and thereby the happiness and prosperity of the Canadian people.

I was wondering in view of those remarks by the Prime Minister if the Finance minister could not give us some assurance that the government will assist in carrying on this work of maintaining the health of the Canadian people by restoring the grants of \$20,000 to these societies.

The CHAIRMAN: I want to call attention to the fact that we are on item No. 55.

Mr. HEENAN: My understanding was that we could ask any questions on this item.

[Mr. Heenan.]

The CHAIRMAN: Within the department.

Mr. HEENAN: The government promised to retain one item in each department, but it is quite evident that they did not retain one for this department.

Mr. RHODES: The understanding has not been violated at all, because one item was retained in each department; but finally we arrive at a point where it is necessary to pass the items if we are ever to close the session of parliament. If my hon. friend were logical in his contention we would never conclude the business of the session, because we would always have one item remaining in each department. If the committee does not object, I certainly take no exception to my hon. friend asking a question at this stage. There is no question that the cause for which my hon. friend speaks is an extremely worthy one. At the same time it is a provincial matter, but I do not think that that point would be stressed if we were in funds. As a matter of fact, we are driven to the necessity of reducing our estimates to the lowest possible point and a number of very worthy items have had to be eliminated and others materially reduced. That is the only answer I can make at the moment. If we come to better times the answer might be different.

Mr. SPENCER: I should like to take the opportunity of supporting the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River in the contentions he has made. The Minister of National Health is not in his seat, and my remarks are largely for the benefit of the Minister of Finance as he is the one who probably has more to do with cutting out this grant than anyone else. There have been two grants cut out this year, the one which the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River mentioned for the Canadian Social Hygiene Council, and the other a grant of \$100,000 which from 1920 up to this year has been given to the provincial government to help fight venereal diseases. The cutting out of these grants will be a tremendous hardship to the provinces. I believe that the house generally is behind these grants. Petitions were signed largely in this house and I believe sent to the Minister of Finance, but unfortunately we have not heard what became of them. The excuse is being made that as this is a health matter it is one for the provinces to deal with. I cannot hold with that in the slightest degree. Disease cannot be confined to one province. It is certainly interprovincial. The burden on the provinces is increasing tremendously, and now they have this extra burden thrown on their hands, and less money to spend. I notice that this year