

—and that is the prerogative of a province—then, of course, we could bring in national health insurance without a constitutional amendment by grants-in-aid. The scheme resulting from grants-in-aid will not be as uniform or as good, but anything is better than what we have at present.

Honourable senators, this is not a new subject with me. I have advocated health insurance for 25 years, which is all of my active political life. If I was a radical then, I am an advanced radical today. My views were moulded by the storms which raged around me in my youth. In those days insecurity was all about me. That same insecurity of crippling health costs still exists, and will continue to exist, until national health insurance is realized.

I had also planned to speak on crime, penal reform and probation, a subject in which I thought I should take more interest here than I took in the House of Commons. I intend to speak on housing and on foreign affairs, but I shall leave those subjects to another day. However, there is one matter which I must bring to the attention of the Senate at this time, for I have strong feelings on it.

It has always been my view, and this is the first opportunity I have had to say it, that the Senate can play a very much more important role than it does in the field of public inquiry. In this respect I have in mind one subject which in my opinion is long overdue and screaming for attention. If there is wisdom among us, and I believe there is, and if there is experience of many years, as I am sure there is, then these qualities should be put to use in the most beneficial manner. Frankly, the Senate of Canada faces the task of reviving public confidence in it. I know of no better way of accomplishing that end than by continuing to use our talent and experience in the undivided service of our people in the field of public inquiry.

At this session, as early as possible, the Senate in conjunction with the House of Commons should undertake an immediate study of Canada's No. 1 health problem, the most dreaded affliction of mankind, mental illness. This subject is, as I say, long overdue for study. It is a little understood problem, and for too long has been sloughed off and neglected. It is time we had a national survey to create an atmosphere of understanding.

When I speak of the mentally ill, most honourable senators know what I am talking about: I speak of the hidden people, victims of superstition, unnoticed and forgotten, in a forbidden world, and living in a world of their own. These mental patients occupy one-half of the hospital beds in Canada. The

cost of their care has risen over the past fifteen consecutive years to a point where it is now in excess of \$70 million annually, with no end in sight.

Mentally retarded children outnumber all those afflicted by polio, blindness and rheumatic fever. Mental disease touches one in every fifty families in Canada. It is time that we brought the subject out in the open and had a good look at it. Thus, we could sweep away the myths surrounding this disease and deal with reality. Here is an opportunity to strike an important blow for human progress. I suggest that we should enter into such a study in order to obtain a greater understanding of mental illness, its causes and how it can be prevented. Let us learn something of the custodial problems and help to break down the barrier between the community and mental hospitals. It is time we recognized that the mentally afflicted are human beings with talents which can be developed into useful and worthwhile activities.

We in our time have been helpless against many diseases, but by study, application and expenditure of money we have driven back such diseases as smallpox, scarlet fever, tuberculosis and pneumonia. A better example of our progress is our fight against polio. Ten years ago—five years and, yes, two years ago—there was faith in the ultimate defeat of polio but there was little to justify that faith. Today we are in sight of a remedy. We must not give up.

I urge this house to give careful consideration to the suggestion I have made. I for one, and I am sure honourable senators feel the same way, am not prepared to write off the 66,000 Canadians now in our mental hospitals and the 10,000 to 20,000 waiting for admission.

Honourable senators, I have stepped across the hall from one house to the other. There are different walls and new faces, but my perspective remains unchanged. I believe it is what men and women do with human and material resources that largely determines their future.

We have before us a bright and glorious future, if we are determined to make it so.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Haig, the debate was adjourned.

DIVORCE

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of report No. 1 of the Standing Committee on Divorce, which was presented yesterday.

Hon. Arthur W. Roebuck, Chairman of the committee, moved that the report be adopted.