

inducing more of these trained nurses to remain in their profession. A great disservice was done in that respect last year when the government introduced a measure which had the effect of increasing the taxes of married men who are the husbands of nurses who otherwise would be prepared to continue in the nursing profession. Many married nurses were affected by this increase in the tax which arises from the reduction of exemption in the salaries of married men.

This, unfortunately, is the sort of problem in which parliament under its present organization, is almost powerless to assist the minister. I think parliament will welcome an opportunity to assist the minister. Hon. members who have spoken in the debate so far have expressed the desire to be of assistance. I believe there are no members in the house—I would be sorry to think there are any—who would wish to see these important social questions such as health, welfare and social security made the subjects of political, partisan debate. Those are subjects on which all parties ought to be united in their effort to bring about better conditions in this country. But at the present time, with the kind of organization we have in the house, members are prevented from making their full contribution to the solution of these problems.

An hon. MEMBER: What are you doing about it?

Mr. FLEMING: I am doing as much as I can, within the present organization of the house. And I should hope that, like many other members in the house, I would be able to make a better contribution if we had a method of proceeding with more detailed information and more detailed study than is possible at the present time.

There is one aspect of this question of maternal mortality and child mortality which, I think, is deserving of mention. We are all greatly concerned about immigration; it is a matter of vast importance. I believe we are prepared to see some substantial sums spent on immigration, for the seeking of immigrants of the right type, healthy immigrants both in mind and in body. Here we are faced with a situation where, annually, we see 15,000 children die under the age of one year in Canada, and we see also a maternal mortality rate which fills us all with concern. We are glad to note the progress that has been made in recent years in the matter of maternal mortality, through the reduction of the rate over a period of time. But I believe we are all agreed that much more should be done than has been done, because that rate is far too high for this country.

Mr. MARTIN: Has my hon. friend the latest table?

Mr. FLEMING: I have the latest table which appears in the report.

Mr. MARTIN: I just wished to make sure; I am trying to be helpful.

Mr. FLEMING: If this country is prepared to spend a substantial sum of money to obtain immigrants, then I think that equally we want to see that more young Canadians at birth are given an opportunity for life and health. Money can just as wisely be spent in that way. I am not minimizing the importance of immigration; far from it. Let us have the right type of immigrants. But here is an instance where we are losing a substantial number of infant Canadians every year, and something must be done now to improve that situation.

My time has almost expired, and I shall conclude with only one further observation. Of course there are limitations on the powers given under our constitution to the federal government in the matter of health. As we all know, the administration of health is in the hands of the provinces, and it should remain there. Health measures must be administered by the provinces. All these social measures must be administered by those governments which are closest to the people, and that means a substantial measure of administration through municipal governments.

But there are several respects in which the Dominion Department of National Health and Welfare can do much in the field of health. The first is in the matter of research. The minister has given a great deal of praise to research workers in respect of cancer. He had less to say about arthritis. I would say there are no limitations on the power of the dominion government to support research work. There must be far more done in the matter of research in Canada, and in connection with health measures, than we have begun to do or have even begun to think of doing up to the present time. Cancer is one example, perhaps the most striking, because of its alarming death rate. Each of us has lost a near relative as a result of this terrible scourge. There is, too, the scourge of arthritis: 600,000 people in Canada are suffering from it at the present time. As the minister has said, there are difficulties in the way of persevering with research in the matter of arthritis; but we must overcome those difficulties. It is a scourge which we cannot meet with folded hands.