

*Supply—National Health*

Mr. SUTHERLAND: Yes.

Mr. HOWDEN: Who would be the referee in the matter of these disabled individuals? Naturally he would be a medical man, but I assume he would be in the employ of the department.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: The final decision rests with the War Veterans Allowance Committee which has a medical adviser.

Mr. VENIOT: I wish to direct attention to a case that recently came under my notice. Under the act a soldier's widow who remarries, if her second husband dies within five years, can become pensionable again.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: That is correct.

Mr. VENIOT: I know of one or two cases where the widow remarried after drawing a pension for, say seven or eight years or five or six years and now she is a widow again. Her second husband has died, but she is over the five year period, having been married more than five years the second time. These women are in desperate circumstances, and I was wondering whether the government has taken into consideration amending the act in that regard. Of course the second marriage saved a lot of money to the government in pension, but I do not think they would lose anything if they extended the period beyond five years, making it ten years, so that the woman would again be entitled to pension.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: As the hon. member knows, that would have to be given considerable thought.

Item agreed to.

National Health—

The administration of the acts respecting food and drugs, opium and narcotic drugs and proprietary or patent medicines, including the laboratory of hygiene, \$130,000.

Public health engineering, \$15,880.

Marine hospitals, including burial expenses of destitute deceased mariners, and grants to institutions assisting sailors, \$163,500.

The administration of the acts respecting quarantine and leprosy, \$150,000.

Immigration medical services, \$126,920.

Mr. HOWDEN: It was pointed out last night in the course of the discussion on the unemployment insurance bill that the Department of Pensions and National Health had quite wide powers in regard to the health of the Canadian people. In that connection I should like to ask the minister whether any survey or inquiry has been made by the department at any time of which he has knowledge into the cost and efficiency of medical service to Canadian people.

[Mr. Coote.]

Mr. SUTHERLAND: Nothing has been done in such detail as that, because it has been realized, or at least I have realized—and I took a great interest in this work even before I took charge of the department—that the assistance and cooperation of the medical profession are of great importance in such a survey. As the hon. gentleman well knows, that aspect of the question has received a great deal of care from the medical associations, both dominion and provincial. All that work is in process of completion and I do not see any use in trying to duplicate that investigation. As soon as it is finished, it undoubtedly will form a splendid basis for possible further investigation in detail.

Mr. HOWDEN: Surveys of this kind have been made in both Canada and the United States. I believe it has been estimated that the cost of medical service to the Canadian people, largely a direct charge, is about \$311,000,000 a year. On the other hand it has been estimated that the cost of medical service to the people of the United States is something over \$3,500,000,000 a year, which figures out in both instances at around \$30 a head. During the regime of President Hoover an inquiry was undertaken as to the cost of medical service to the people of the United States. Of course the United States is not Canada, but the two peoples live side by side; they have a common language and to a large extent their civilizations are similar. Before this inquiry was entered upon it was realized that there was a great deficiency in medical service to the American people, and on the other hand it is well known that medical men are driving taxis and doing manual labour and institutional work for which they receive little or no remuneration. An inquiry was therefore set on foot; a survey was made of some 1,800 families in all economic grades, and some very interesting facts were ascertained. I do not propose to burden the committee with much detail, but I will state a few of the facts that were ascertained. The matter is covered in a synopsis appearing in a current journal. It was found that 52 per cent of the American people receive no services from a physician. I think these figures would largely correspond with conditions in this country. It was found that 79 per cent get no attention from a dentist, that 89 per cent receive no health examination or similar preventive service, and 62 per cent receive no medical, dental or eye care of any sort. These statistics are for the prosperous years of 1928-29. Conditions are indubitably much worse now.