

Thousands of dollars would be saved by the miners' contribution to the unemployment insurance fund and more thousands would be saved because it would prevent the closing of other industries in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick through lack of fuel. I would strongly urge the government to show the same consideration to the mine workers of Nova Scotia that the Minister of Finance has shown to the operators of gold mining in Canada.

Mr. W. G. BLAIR (Lanark): Mr. Speaker, I regret to note that there is no mention of health in the speech from the throne. There is mention of a measure to be introduced in connection with social security, but that is the only reference to any new legislation from the Department of Health and Welfare. It is my intention at this time to review health conditions in Canada and to bring before this parliament the urgent necessity for action which cannot be further delayed.

In order to lay a sound foundation for a nation, the people of that nation must be fit mentally and physically. It is the duty of the government to give leadership, direction and financial support in order to reach that goal. For the past six years all our energies have been devoted to war for the defence of liberty, but it is now high time to take stock of the health standards of our people. We received our first intimation of the necessity for a health stocktaking when it was discovered that approximately forty per cent of our young men were unfit at the time of enlistment in the last war. The high percentage of unfitness in this group would indicate that the general health situation is even worse in other age groups.

This is an alarming state of affairs and is sufficient reason for the Canadian parliament making an inquiry into the cause of this situation. Many of these conditions could be corrected and it is the duty of the government to act, instead of complacently taking the attitude that there is no cause for alarm or that nature will heal the difficulty. I cannot find any reason for congratulation or satisfaction in the government's programme. It is to be noted that, while there are house committees on agriculture, veterans affairs, railways, fisheries and so on in this parliament, there is no house committee on health except a joint committee which met only four or five times last year. Surely the health of a nation, the relief of suffering and the urgent need for medical research should be of as much importance, or even of more importance, than the matters brought up for discussion and debate in the other house committees I have mentioned.

[Mr. Moore.]

I point out the necessity for action for the following reasons:

First, cancer, tuberculosis, and mental illness have reached an appalling total and the first two show an extremely high death rate.

Second, the death rate in preventable disease is high.

Third, hospital facilities are inadequate for the treatment of all disease and especially so for the treatment of mental diseases, tuberculosis, and for the care of incurables. Hospital facilities are especially lacking in rural areas.

Fourth, there is a shortage of trained nurses to staff new hospitals and existing hospitals and for service in public health.

Fifth, the high cost of sickness.

Sixth, the necessity for organized services in child and maternal health.

Seventh, the need for early diagnostic measures.

Eighth, the crying need for research into the causes of such disease as cancer, arthritis, poliomyelitis and rheumatic fever.

Let us first consider the situation regarding cancer. Every year, cancer kills approximately 14,000 Canadians. It is second only to heart disease as a cause of death. We do not know the cause, but we know that in many cases this disease can be checked or even cured if an early diagnosis is made. Apart from the death rate of this disease the course is usually long and the cause of much suffering.

I am pleased to note that the National Cancer Institute of Canada has been formed. When a meeting of those interested in this dread disease was held in Ottawa a short time ago the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) said that the resources of the King George V cancer fund were at the disposal of this newly formed organization for cancer research. The King George V cancer fund was raised in 1935 by the citizens of Canada. It amounted to \$500,000. It was raised by public subscription and not by government grant. From 1937 to 1940, \$14,000 was paid out each year to the cancer research committee of the Canadian Medical Association. In 1940, one-half of the grant was paid to the association. In 1942, the grant to the association was reduced to \$7,000. In view of the fact that 14,000 people of Canada died last year from this disease, it would appear to me that the government is pursuing a niggardly policy in dealing with research on this national problem.

The provincial government of Ontario gave a grant of \$500,000 to the Ontario cancer research foundation which has raised over \$1,000,000 for research and treatment.