

In the British House of Commons recently Prime Minister Macmillan, in speaking of a summit meeting, expressed a few words of caution which I wish firmly to endorse. He said:

"The journey which we have to undertake in this pilgrimage is likely to be a long one and it will require patience as well as faith."

Canada has every reason to be particularly interested in the work of paediatrics. Canada is a young country in years and in population being a Confederation for less than 100 years. With one-third of its population (or 5,661,800 persons) under 15 years of age Canada's birthrate is foremost among those of the major industrial nations of the world, and the care of children is the most vital of its national tasks.

In Canada direct responsibility for health services rests with provincial and local governments, assisted by national and local voluntary agencies. The Federal Government's activities are constitutionally confined to special programmes of a nation-wide nature and to the provision of assistance to the provinces. These programmes take many forms, the most important of which is a programme of national hospital insurance finally inaugurated in the last two years and in which eight of the ten provinces are now co-operating with the National Government.

That Canada has shared with other countries of the world in the conquest of many of the ancient scourges of mankind is well known. Sir Frederick Banting and Dr. Charles Best made the epochal discovery of insulin, the treatment of diabetes and Canada made a significant contribution to the development of the vaccine for poliomyelitis.

Much more remains to be done. The need for further research in the field of diseases of children was given recognition in the establishment by the Parliament of Canada during the last month of the Queen Elizabeth II Canadian Research Fund to Aid in Research on the Diseases of Children in commemoration of the visit of Her Majesty, The Queen of Canada. This fund will provide an additional assistance to a half million dollars provided by Parliament during the present fiscal year under the National Health Grants programme for research related to diseases of children.

The purpose of the Queen's Fund will be to provide financial aid to institutions and individuals in Canada engaged in research in children's diseases. I need only mention the problems of leukemia and mental retardation in children, and neo-natal deaths, to indicate something of the magnitude of the problem.