

do not see how the dominion government could make a grant to a single educational or medical institution without creating a precedent which would expose the dominion government to demands from every kind of institution which ordinarily would look to the provinces for support. Those who want to change the existing relationships between the dominion and the provinces can discuss projects, change them, but that cannot be done on a piecemeal basis. You must have regard for the constitutional relationships that exist or you will bring about a chaotic condition. I do not think anyone could express greater admiration than I for the work of the institute, but so long as we have our existing constitutional relationships I do not think it is possible to expect the federal government to make a grant for a single purpose such as this.

Mr. KNOWLES: For my own part I would rather that we did this directly, but I should like to make a suggestion along the lines of the present practice. Last Friday the minister indicated that there was some sort of inter-departmental or joint committee on research under the national research council. I believe there is liaison between the minister's department and that committee through the person of a member of the committee. Is that so?

Mr. CLAXTON: That was the situation. There is a medical division of the national research council which considers applications for grants in aid of research.

Mr. KNOWLES: In the estimates of the Department of Reconstruction and Supply there is an item covering grants in aid of research. It is a mere bagatelle, but it seems to me that the minister who is interested in matters of health should see that his representative on that committee urge that some of the money listed for grants in aid of research should be granted to this institute. I hope the minister will see that that suggestion receives consideration.

Mr. CLAXTON: I shall be glad to see that it gets consideration.

Mr. ADAMSON: In connection with the neurological institute in Montreal, has there been any curtailment of its work?

Mr. CLAXTON: I would think it is quite the contrary.

Mr. ADAMSON: There has been a curtailment of research owing to lack of funds in some psychiatric hospitals throughout Canada.

[Mr. Claxton.]

Mr. FULTON: In connection with the matter of grants in aid to various institutions and the point just raised by the minister, I should like to bring up the general question of grants in aid of hospitals across the country. Apparently many hospitals, because of lack of building materials or lack of funds, have been forced to curtail construction and expansion work and now find themselves in urgent need of accommodation. This question was discussed by the minister and myself in connection with a specific hospital. I do not wish to go into local details on this general item, but I have had a letter stating that hospitals generally are finding it embarrassing because of the temporary suspension of the dominion-provincial conference and the fact that they are unable to get grants from the dominion government. There is in this letter one passage which I think is quite interesting. This is a letter from the Canadian hospital council, Toronto, which I understand represents hospitals across the dominion, addressed to the British Columbia hospitals' association. It reads as follows:

The collapse of the recent federal-provincial conference is not making it any easier for hospitals to proceed with their construction programmes. Federal loans at low interest were contingent upon a favourable solution to the taxing question and, therefore, cannot proceed. Meanwhile, in most of the provinces provincial assistance is not materializing, the provinces also waiting for a solution to this impasse. The situation is becoming steadily more serious and we are fast approaching what could well be termed a national emergency. A few days ago the gravity of this situation which would quickly result in a break-down of our hospital facilities if a major epidemic developed as in 1918-1919, was discussed with the deputy minister of national health and welfare and we have since forwarded to him for the consideration of his minister and we hope of the cabinet a letter urging that in the interests of the citizens of Canada this matter be not left to any legal interpretations of who has the responsibility for health, or the political juggling of federal-provincial taxing rights, but that the federal government proceed at once to make funds available for the very essential expansion of hospitals. Under such circumstances, low interest loans might need to be repaid rather than amortized under succeeding annual grants to provinces as proposed last year but unless funds are forthcoming from some source hospital expansion will not proceed with sufficient rapidity to cope with the situation.

It is appreciated that the matter is one which, as the letter points out, has been made more difficult by the failure to reach immediate agreement at the conference. But I would ask the minister whether consideration has been given to the representations made by the Canadian hospital council, and, if so, whether there is any likelihood of action being taken by his department along the lines recommended in that letter?