

The situation is a serious one, and the importance of it will be thoroughly appreciated by those who have been following the world-wide movement for the suppression of venereal diseases.

When it is learned that more than 12 per cent of the patients admitted to the public wards of the Toronto General Hospital, for various diseases, medical and surgical, have syphilis, it will be realized that we are dealing with an acute situation, as the facts which apply to that institution are merely an index of the prevalence of syphilis in the community.

The menace to the health of the nation is perhaps greater than that of tuberculosis, as the problem is so much more difficult to deal with, and the subtle manifestations of the malady are so much more involved and obscure, as well as not easy to treat.

If registration of the tuberculous is desirable, the same argument is doubly applicable in the regulation of syphilis.

No false sentiment, no desire to shirk our manifest responsibility, should be encouraged. It is a case where a spade should be called a spade without the least hesitation.

In tuberculosis it is possible to control infection, in syphilis it is extremely difficult to do so for reasons that are self-evident.

One of these reasons is, that prostitutes are the source from which the greater part of the infections come—carefully compiled statistics showing that 75 per cent are traceable to the women of the street.

As 60 per cent of all prostitutes are feeble minded, a serious situation at once faces us in Canada, as very little intelligent provision has been made for the care of this class.

To show how this works it may be said that in our clinic a few weeks ago we had under observation at one time a feeble minded girl and five men she had recently infected with syphilis.

In the old world the problem has been faced for some years with varying success, and since 1874 and 1876 Denmark and Norway have employed a system of compulsory registration.

In England at the present time a large number of the best people in the realm are moving actively, as the menace has grown to such proportions, and in Canada we must find some solution of the present difficulties.

In Western Australia advanced legislation went into force on December 8th, 1915: Bill No. 55, of 1915; an Act to Amend the Health Act, 1911-12.