

of members on this side of the house had made speeches on state medicine and health matters, no proposal had ever been submitted to the house for the application of a form of state medicine.

Mr. BENNETT: No measure has been submitted to the house.

Mr. HOWDEN: I have a distinct recollection of having addressed the house on state medicine in 1931, and if I am not badly mistaken I made definite proposals with regard to how state medicine could be applied. The need for medical attention and state medicine or health insurance has never been so great as it is at present and has been for the last number of years. The only reason most of the provinces have not to-day a complete and efficient system of state medicine is that they cannot afford it. I have suggested in this house and have heard others suggest that if this federal authority, as in the case of old age pensions, were to submit to the provinces a proposal offering relief under the stipulation that they should adopt a standard system of health insurance or state medicine, it would be rapidly and readily taken up. Is the health of the Canadian people a matter of no interest or responsibility to this government? If so, then I need say nothing further about it.

Mr. BENNETT: Why "this government"?

Mr. HOWDEN: The federal government; that is what I mean.

Mr. BENNETT: That is better.

Mr. HOWDEN: If it be a matter of interest or responsibility to the federal government, there is no question that if we extend offers of assistance to the provinces with the stipulation that they adopt and agree to a standard of service, they will be ready to take up such a proposition.

Mr. BENNETT: I suppose it is unnecessary to remind the committee that nothing has been said touching the question of health insurance, either in the statute from which the right hon. gentleman read, or in the observations made by the hon. member for St. Boniface. If this committee is anxious, as I believe it is, to assist in the discharge of the duties of the state to those who are laid aside by illness, it will realize that here are practically 2,000,000 people affected by this unemployment insurance measure. That means definite, exact information with respect to 2,000,000 people, which we are asking this body to collect. It will depend upon the extent of the knowledge thus ascertained whether and to what degree the federal power may be able to engraft upon this scheme of

unemployment insurance, health insurance as well. I am not going to disclose at the moment the extent to which we propose to deal with that in another way later, beyond saying this, that in this country at the present time nine different views are expressed with respect to health. Starting in British Columbia, I recall that at least fifteen years ago a suggestion with regard to health insurance was vigorously asserted in various parts of that province. The financial difficulty is the one that has been set up as preventing the province from carrying this out. In Alberta it has been made a municipal matter, and in Calgary the hospital tax is part of the taxes we pay annually. In outside communities they gather together municipalities for that purpose. In Saskatchewan they have something of the same system. In Manitoba it is slightly different. In Ontario they have specially directed efforts towards ensuring the health of the people through the activities of the health department itself. In Quebec it is much the same, except that the voluntary hospitals are perhaps more numerous. In the lower provinces the situation is something the same, except in Prince Edward Island. I put this again to the committee: This dominion, when the information is adequately in hand, may be able, as incidental to this unemployment insurance scheme, to take care of the health of all those covered by this insurance. That is the reason that part IV is in this bill. Ordinary reading of it, I think, would at once disclose that fact. But inasmuch as the provinces have done what they have, and have not indicated their willingness to lessen in any sense their activities, but only to ask us for money for them, how can you under this statute correlate these activities unless there is some understanding? What is pressed upon us is this—the right hon. gentleman knows; it was pressed upon him when he was Prime Minister—that grants should be made to this institution and to that, to this organization and to that—\$10,000, \$15,000, \$20,000 or more, for the purpose, they say, of enabling them to carry on propaganda with respect to the health of the people. I do not think that will accomplish what is aimed at. It does not touch the sick, except with respect to the social service to which I directed attention last year, on the transfer of the work that was being done by the department that was not able to touch the people to the body that did touch them directly. I put it to the committee whether on reading these clauses carefully they do not realize that the purpose is clear, namely, in the first place to accept responsibility when the responsibility is known, but not to accept it until