

which is of acknowledged importance, the conservation of the public health.

While I have argued the desirability of federal control of a matter which is of such momentous interest to the nation at large, I would not have you suppose that there should be any lessening of the activities of local health boards. On the contrary, it will always be that the principal work must be done by the local boards, and rather than a curtailment of their functions a very substantial extension thereof is most devoutly to be wished. Under ordinary circumstances the influence of a central bureau would be merely directive, as far as local matters are concerned, and it would not be expected to assume actual control except when local authorities proved unable to properly cope with an epidemic outbreak of disease. But such a central bureau could be usefully employed at all times in studying the various conditions which favour the outbreak and spread of infectious diseases; could keep local boards posted upon new developments in preventive medicine; could establish and maintain an information department, registering all epidemics (no matter how limited) and warning local boards when danger threatens; could direct and supervise investigation into the causes of physical deterioration, degeneracy, criminality, mental disorder and mental defect; could consolidate the present Dominion health services and possibly control the examination of food stuffs, etc.; and could collect and assort the morbidity and mortality statistics for the whole Dominion. None of these duties would in the slightest degree lessen the responsibility or usefulness of the local boards of health, upon which we will always have to place our main reliance for the safeguarding of the community against preventable disease, and upon which must always devolve the duty of attending to the proper enforcement of the statutes in-so-far as they relate to public health matters.

And I would bespeak for the local boards the hearty support and encouragement of every citizen. There is too much criticism and too little support given such boards to-day. The weaknesses and insufficiencies of most health boards are only too apparent to their membership, and sympathetic interest and proper backing