

The hon. member for North Battleford (Mrs. Nielsen) said that one of the greatest enemies of health is that malnutrition brought about, in many cases, by undernourishment, which, in turn, is the result of insufficient financing. Family allowances, to a degree, will take care of that difficulty if, as was pointed out by the hon. member, there is proper supervision, and proper information is given to the families concerned.

I am not going to oppose the setting up of this new department, because I believe it is long overdue. It is my hope that the government will hasten the implementing of these improvements to the full.

Mr. G. T. FULFORD (Leeds): Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal briefly with a matter existing in Canada to-day which I believe the new Department of National Health and Welfare will have to consider immediately at the conclusion of the war. I do not recommend that what I shall suggest should be undertaken right away, because I am aware of the difficulty connected with securing materials and, second, that of securing the necessary workmen to complete buildings.

Speaking, however, as a governor of the Brockville General hospital, I feel that as soon as this war is over, material grants will have to be made to the public hospitals of Canada. Brockville is a town of over 12,000 people. We have two hospitals; one is the Protestant General hospital, and the other is the Roman Catholic St. Vincent de Paul hospital. Since the introduction of the blue cross plan, a plan whereby for so much a week each member of the family is cared for, conditions in the hospitals have become intolerable. To give hon. members an idea of the conditions let me say that in the Brockville General hospital, built originally to accommodate seventy-two beds, there are to-day 116 beds, and there has been no increase in the size of the building.

I have known of cases concerning women, who, upon being sent to the maternity ward, have found that ward so crowded that they have been obliged to wait in the corridors. The agony that these poor women suffer is beyond comprehension. Furthermore, it is not fair to those patients who are suffering, perhaps, from serious maladies, but who find themselves placed in rooms adjoining the corridor.

Very few hospitals in the smaller towns have the required isolation facilities for contagious diseases, nor have they proper equipment. I realize that conditions are far better in Eastern Canada than they are in the west,

[Mr. C. E. Johnston.]

chiefly owing to the fact that our distances are not so great, but serving the town of Gananoque, in the county of Leeds, with a population of 3,600, there is no hospital nearer than Kingston. I might add that as late as last week there was no doctor in that town, and had it not been for the good graces of the Canadian army there would be none to-day. Fortunately, however, through the procurement and assignment board, they were able to secure one.

Under any health scheme people will flock more and more to their doctors and the hospitals. I believe that the blue cross hospital scheme has proven that. Therefore, when a health insurance programme is adopted in Canada we must be prepared greatly to enlarge our hospital facilities. And, having Gananoque as an example, we shall also have to be prepared to educate many more young men in the study of medicine. Certainly, as conditions exist to-day, and even taking account of those doctors who will return from overseas, we shall definitely not have enough to satisfy the common needs of the people.

I urge, therefore, that serious consideration be given by the new department to the giving of grants to smaller communities to enlarge those hospitals which now exist and, where they do not exist, to enable communities to build community hospitals.

Mr. J. G. DIEFENBAKER (Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, up to the present I have not referred to any of the social legislation that has been introduced in connection with the various departments which have been set up. Speaking for myself, I am rather disappointed at the fact that while these new departments of government are being set up, the problem of social security and social welfare is not being faced by this parliament at this time. Everywhere throughout the world to-day, particularly since the war began, there has been an intensification of the desire of people for a maximum of security. Only to-day I was reading a report of the national resources development board of the United States wherein is epitomized the aims and purposes of social security and social welfare in a way that I do not believe has been equalled anywhere else. In this report is set up a bill of rights for the people not only of the United States but throughout the united nations. It summarizes the viewpoint of those who believe that there can be social security and that there can be an extension of our social horizons under a system of private initiative. That