

are being given to these people, and those who are working among them say that because they are now receiving the family allowance their children are better clothed, better fed and are getting better care in every way.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Gershaw: Much has been done in the general field of medicine, but much still remains to be accomplished. Away back in the time of Julius Caesar the expectation of life was only twenty-three or twenty-four years. One hundred years ago, in 1850, life expectancy was thirty-nine years. In 1900 the life expectancy rose to forty-nine years, and at the present time it is about 67.7 years. These figures are perhaps a little deceiving in that the greatest advance has been made in conquering contagious diseases of children and various other infantile diseases. At the present time a man or woman who has reached the age of fifty can only look forward to a life expectancy of about two years more than he or she could have looked forward to in 1900. Much remains to be done in conquering certain adult diseases, and under the able leadership of the Honourable Paul Martin the Department of National Health and Welfare has embarked on a large scale health program. Over a period of five years something like \$165 million is to be provided for this purpose.

There are three objectives in view. The first is to assist the provinces to make surveys in order to definitely determine their needs. Twice each year provincial and dominion representatives are to meet here in Ottawa to talk over these problems, to co-ordinate their activities, and to prevent overlapping and duplication of efforts.

The second objective is to assist in hospital construction. Hospitals all over the country are overcrowded. Prepayment plans and other schemes have induced people to use the hospitals more, so that there is a great need for more accommodation. Here I want to voice a complaint which is being expressed among medical men and hospital men generally. I do not know how carefully emigrants who leave distant shores are screened before coming to Canada, but the complaint has been made that quite a few displaced persons and other immigrants afflicted with chronic diseases like tuberculosis are finding their way into the hospitals soon after arriving in Canada. I do hope that a very strict physical examination of prospective immigrants will be made, because at present our hospitals are very crowded.

The third great objective of the department is to provide sums for research and assistance in combatting specially devastating diseases. Tuberculosis is the Great White Plague. As you, Mr. Speaker, well know, it could be

called one of the "the captains of the men of death". It can be eliminated, and to a great extent it is being eliminated, for the causes and progress of the disease are now well known. A total of about four and a half million dollars is being made available by the dominion to the provinces for research and assistance, each province being paid a flat sum, plus an amount based upon population and number of cases.

Just here may I say that recently discovered drugs have given new hope to those suffering from tuberculosis. Among these drugs is streptomycin. A number of cases of tuberculosis were carefully x-rayed, and it was found that the sputum was positive and the disease fairly well advanced. After the patients had been treated with streptomycin for a period of about three months, examination then revealed that in approximately 89 per cent of the cases the sputum was negative, and the x-ray films showed that considerable healing had taken place. The hospital stay of the patients was therefore shortened.

However, cancer is still the great scourge of mankind. In some mysterious way cancer seems to be linked with the aging of our tissues, and owing to the steady increase in the proportion of people in the older age group the disease is of course becoming more common. As you so well know, Mr. Speaker, when a cancer begins the cells multiply rapidly, take on a wild overgrowth, and in a short time there develops a malignant tumor, which will spread by metastasis to different parts of the body. No one knows why the cells take on that wild overgrowth; that is a problem which is being studied today in universities and national cancer institutes. The Department of National Health and Welfare is spending about three and a half million dollars a year with the provinces on a matched basis for the support of research, a sum which averages per capita about three times as much as is being spent for the same purpose in the United States.

Of course, a good deal has been discovered about cancer. In its treatment the X-ray, radium and surgery all have a place. Time is the important factor, because nearly all these tumors can be cured if treated early. It is found that in about eighty-five out of one hundred cases early and complete removal by surgery offers the best hope of permanent cure. In these days much more can be done by surgery than was possible in days gone by. To begin with, the diagnosis has been greatly facilitated by use of the X-ray and the modern microscope. Then, too, anaesthetics are administered now with much less shock to the patient than was usual in the past. Intravenous treatments and blood transfusions are also very helpful. However, more important than all these is the effect of penicillin and