

Supply—Health and Welfare

have been spending a great deal more than that. Had we spent \$1,000 each on those cases it would have cost \$95,672,000. Of course we do not know how many could have been saved. In the course of treatment we shall uncover better and newer methods of treatment and, finally, through a combination of clinical and research effort, I hope we shall get this disease under control.

In closing, I merely wish to remind the minister of the proposals of the government of Canada in their brief to the dominion-provincial conference on reconstruction.

Mr. MARTIN: They are ever in my mind.

Mrs. STRUM: Here I think the government did an excellent piece of work. Quoting from page 30, I notice it says:

In May, 1944—

And we should remember that this was before the last election.

—a conference was held at Ottawa which was attended by representatives of all the provinces.

And so on. Farther down it says:

Since the meeting in 1944, health insurance has been further considered by the federal government in the light of the views expressed by the provinces . . .

That is the part that I found interesting. This was the last session of parliament before the election of 1945.

. . . In the speeches from the throne which began the session in January, 1944, and which closed the session in January, 1945, the federal government declared again its desire to bring in a nation-wide system of health insurance as soon as suitable arrangements could be made with the provinces. It was stated that this would be one of the subjects to be brought up at the dominion-provincial conference to be held as soon as possible following the general election.

Then it sets out the various aspects of the scheme for health insurance. I would plead with the government to do for health what they have done in the field of taxation, and to permit the provinces individually to take advantage of health schemes and to work out on the basis of individual agreements steps whereby they can adequately finance health programmes. The report so well sets out the proposals covering the various aspects of the steps by which this could take place. This indicates that the preliminary work has been done. The Marsh report and these reports indicate that we do not need to go on spending money in finding out what to do. We know what to do. These terrible diseases which cause so much suffering and such great loss of life indicate that you must have an overall, blanket scheme of health insurance so that people may have periodic examinations

[Mrs. Strum.]

to detect incipient arthritis, to detect the first symptoms of cancer, to give help to the pregnant mother when she needs it most, to care for the pre-school child, to take care of the old people. Until we do that we shall have this terrible and unnecessary loss of life, and we shall be tearing our hair about the sparse population, and asking where we shall get immigration and how we shall populate this country. Yet we lost in cancer deaths alone, twice as many people as we lost in the war, and we lost more than thrice as many babies. Every day we suffer the loss of broken homes through the unnecessary deaths of young mothers. I would urge the government not to wait until Ontario and Quebec come in, not to wait for another dominion-provincial conference, but to permit the provinces separately to save the lives of their people; because, after all, it is the provinces that have jurisdiction and responsibility in the field of health.

Mr. FLEMING: Any suggestion in connection with the revision of the procedure of the house must always take account of the necessity of finding some means of shortening the time spent in the house without the sacrifice of essential discussion. In what I have to say tonight I hope to put forward a proposal which, far from sacrificing any of the time devoted to this important subject of health and welfare, may actually provide more time and more opportunity for getting to the roots of some of these questions and at the same time help to speed up the procedure of the house.

Here we are dealing with an important department, a department charged with the administration of two subjects of vast importance to the people of Canada, namely, health and welfare. Either one of those is of vital importance. The combination of the two of them in the one department marks it as one of the most important departments of government. It is, as the committee knows, the second largest spender among the government departments. Only the Department of Finance, through the payment of interest on government obligations, actually disburses more money and calls for larger amounts in its estimates than does this department. It seems to me that the test which must be applied by the committee in approaching the estimates of this department is this: Is enough money provided to do what is required to be done and is the country receiving a fair dollar's worth in value for each dollar expended?

There is an obligation on this committee in connection with these estimates which at