

King George V cancer fund, placed under the control of the government to advance cancer research—

Mr. MARTIN: I am sure the hon. gentleman does not mean to say it was put under the control of the government.

Mr. BLAIR: The government were the trustees of this fund.

Mr. MARTIN: No. The trustees were the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Chief Justice of Canada, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, one lay gentleman who represented the insurance bodies, Professor Boyd of the university of Toronto, and Doctor Dube, Dean of Medicine at the university of Montreal.

Mr. BLAIR: I stand corrected on that, but the object is the same. This fund was not used for a period of twelve years except for small amounts which were given out from it at intervals, without a really definite programme in view. The point I wish to make is that during the twelve years when this fund was not in use, approximately 156,000 people in Canada died of cancer. I am glad to say that, at long last, the trustees of this fund have awakened from their comatose condition and have come to a state of realization of the health needs of the nation.

Cancer research at the present time is very small in comparison with the casualty list caused by the disease. Although cancer is regarded as the greatest problem confronting medical research today, only a small amount of money is spent for investigation in this field in comparison with the number of cancer cases. Any attack that we make on this problem must be a long-term attack. Education must be an important factor. An educational programme should emphasize ability to procure treatment for cancer. There is no point in emphasizing correct treatment for cancer unless there are chances to obtain it. We must see to it that opportunities for early diagnosis and successful treatment are available to both the physician and the patient. Better and more extensive facilities for the treatment of cancer are required if we are to bring this terrible disease under control. Cancer is a non-contagious disease.

Approximately 15,000 people die of this disease each year in Canada. While the mortality is high, we must take into consideration the years of suffering and pain for the unfortunate patient afflicted with cancer. The real tragedy lies in the fact that at least one-third of these cancer deaths occurred because the patients themselves failed to recognize the signs and the symptoms of the disease when

[Mr. Blair.]

it was in its early stages. They did not seek medical advice in time to have successful treatment. In sharp contrast, and most encouraging, are the patients who recognized the disease early and, with the help of their family physician, were given the full benefits of surgery or radio-therapy and, as a result, continued to enjoy good health. The public should be educated to the fact that, while it is possible to obtain complete cures in the early stages where the disease is located externally on the body, yet in a large proportion of the cases the cancer is located where present-known treatment cannot effect a cure. We cannot disillusion the public mind that the only reason which has prevented treatment and research has been a matter of costs.

There is one encouraging thing in so far as cancer is concerned. I note in an article in the *Toronto Telegram* of June 2, 1947 giving the causes of deaths in the city of Toronto, that whereas cancer killed 115 persons in the month of May of this year, 148 died of cancer in May of last year. I think the average in a city of that size would keep up; and I believe there is some cause for congratulation in the fact that the number of deaths from cancer has dropped even by this small amount.

I come next to tuberculosis. It must be considered as a disease which killed one out of every four persons dying in the age group from sixteen to thirty-nine years. From September, 1939, to June 30, 1944, tuberculosis killed more Canadians in Canada than were killed in all the theatres of war. There are certain facts about tuberculosis which should be recognized. First, in the last ten years sixty per cent of the deaths from tuberculosis occurred in the most productive age group of life; that is, from twenty to forty-nine years; and over sixty per cent of all patients entering sanatoria for treatment are in this age group. Second, the average cost—and costs are important—including hospital care and loss of wages when a male wage-earner is incapacitated because of tuberculosis, has been estimated at \$5,400; when a female wage-earner is incapacitated, the cost is \$5,000. Third, the cost to the taxpayers for assistance to a family because of tuberculosis has been estimated at \$2,800. Doctor G. C. Brink, director of the division of tuberculosis prevention in the department of health of Ontario, in an article in the *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, of January, 1946, states:

If we are to wipe out this preventable disease there must be:

(a) Adequate diagnostic facilities, which should include enough mass survey equipment,