

the fact that no provision is made for the dependents of the insured. Emphasis is laid on curative rather than preventive methods. The report goes on to urge the extension of the use of existing services and states that as additional funds are available, these services should be supplied where needed. Certain priorities are suggested, and perhaps the house will hear with some surprise the statement that one of the first priorities is better nutrition. It is also suggested that there be a provision of general practitioner service for the dependents of insured persons and the encouragement of wider studies of the causes of ill health.

Criticism is also made that the smaller tradesmen and independent workers do not come under the scheme. It is suggested that those who earn something more than £250 per annum, the limit at the present time, should be allowed to come into the scheme. From information that I have been able to obtain, there would seem to be general agreement as to the principle of health insurance generally, but innumerable criticisms of the details. In some countries, as in France, physicians are paid on a fee basis, the beneficiary paying a portion. In other countries the system is worked on a panel system and each doctor is paid on a capitation basis. The minimum wages for those who come under the scheme range from \$900 to \$1,200. Most insurance schemes do not cover the dependents. The schemes mostly provide for common illnesses that may be cared for by the general practitioner and do not make provision for any preventive medicine, as is being most frequently urged.

Now I come to state medicine proper. Under any definition which I have been able to obtain, state medicine exists in only one country in the world, that is in Russia. I must apologize to the house for not being in a position to speak with any authority on what has happened or is happening in Russia. I am forced to consult the authorities which have been placed at my disposal in order to be able to give any information at all. Two books which have been written within comparatively recent times would seem to contain most of the information necessary for the purposes of this discussion. One was referred to this afternoon by the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Howden), the title being *Red Medicine*. That book would appear to have been written from the capitalistic standpoint rather than from the standpoint of those who are at present in control of Russia. The title of the other book is *Socialized Medicine in the Soviet Union*, by Professor Sigerist of Johns Hopkins university. From

[Mr. Power.]

a reading of that book I would conclude that the professor is rather sympathetic with the theories of those who are now governing soviet Russia. Without entering into any controversy on the matter, I think I have been able to obtain from these books, and from people who have visited Russia, certain information which may be of some interest to the house.

Looking at Russia and considering its medical background, I think we must admit that of all countries in the world, Russia provided the most ample room for experimentation. Strangely enough, it would appear that the first experiment in health insurance in Russia was carried on in 1866 through the municipal authorities or *Zemstvo* organizations. However, perhaps owing to the character of the government or the backward nature of the citizens of the country, very little progress was made. So much so, in 1890 there were only 26,000 hospital beds in all the Russian empire. In 1913 there were only 2,700 medical stations to serve a rural population of 80,000,000 people. In 1917 many districts with a population of more than forty thousand had no doctor at all. In 1914 it was reported in Russia that there were twelve million cases of infectious diseases reported, and an enormous number unreported. So there, if anywhere, was a fertile field for trying out some system or another of state medicine. I do not know that I can approve the method which was followed in putting state medicine into force, nor am I quite sure that I am willing to approve everything that has been done or the manner in which state medicine is being conducted in that country; but I think there is no doubt—and perhaps I say this with the threat of the padlock law hanging over me—that the health of the people must have been enormously improved by some of the measures which came into operation in Russia after the revolution.

Theoretically at least, and on paper, at the present time every citizen in Russia is entitled to free medical advice, treatment and hospitalization. He gets medical care and attention, sanitation, preventive medicine, sickness and accident insurance, and all cognate activities at the expense of the state. But I would imagine, from the information which I have had, that all of the districts of Russia are not as yet fully covered. Other information is to the effect that perhaps even in that country there is a feeling that to the political victors belong the spoils, and one would understand that there is a preference even in giving medical treatment to those who belong to the ruling party in the state; that if one does not happen to be a communist,