

Memorandum as to Venereal Disease
Situation

In May 1919, the Dominion Government as the result of representation made by various social agencies in different parts of the Dominion called a conference of citizens from all of the provinces to discuss possible methods of attacking the Venereal Disease problem in the Dominion.

This conference, largely attended, was held in Ottawa on May 29th and 30th, 1919. Among those present were: His Excellency the Governor General; The Premier, Sir Robert Borden; Hon. N. W. Rowell; President of the Privy Council; Major General J. T. Fotheringham, Director General of Medical Services; the Chief Officers of Health of all of the provinces and citizens representing many interests in the Dominion as well as official representatives of the United States Government.

At this conference a number of addresses were given by authorities on the Venereal Disease question and a series of strongly worded resolutions were passed as necessary to action.

There were certain definite results from this Conference. Immediate results included a grant on the part of the Dominion Government of \$200,000 yearly to the provinces on condition that an equal amount be appropriated by the provinces - the money to be spent largely in the establishment of Venereal Disease clinics. \$10,000 yearly was to go to the formation of a new Dominion wide voluntary organization, The Canadian National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases. The duty of this latter organization formed under the Presidency of Hon. Mr. Justice W. R. Riddell of Toronto, was to undertake propaganda work tending to make effective the Government's treatment scheme and to undertake certain new types of pioneer educational work which could not well be undertaken directly by the Government. This organization was to be supported partly by government and partly voluntary outside contributions.

The result of the decision arrived at has been that all of the provincial governments except Prince Edward Island have co-operated with the Dominion Government. Fifty clinics have been established throughout Canada and considerable propaganda and educational work has been undertaken by the Governments concerned and by the Canadian National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases.

In spite of all that has been done, however, the Venereal Disease problem still looms large as the greatest single public health problem with which we are confronted. Many patients are under treatment - but only a fraction of those who should be dealt with. Many types of educational and propaganda work still remain undone and we are informed that there is a very distinct danger of the Dominion Government deciding to discontinue the \$200,000 grant to the provinces.