



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
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THE DEVELOPING PATTERN OF PUBLIC HEALTH

An address by Mr. Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare, to the 77th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association, in New York City, on October 25, 1949. See also "A New National Health Programme", by Dr. G.D.W. Cameron, No. 48/58.

1. OUR GOAL -- UNIVERSAL GOOD HEALTH

The first thing I want to do tonight is to express my thanks for the resolution that this organization passed last year when you resolved that Canada's new National Health Programme was "a step which makes the year 1948 memorable in the annals of public health on this continent".

For 77 years the American Public Health Association has given such inspired leadership that in the United States and Canada the next half century holds matchless promise for progress in public health.

After your long struggle to win public appreciation of its objectives and adequate support for its programmes, the Members of this Association should feel a sense of real achievement. As pioneers on this continent, and -- in many respects -- world leaders in this vital field of human endeavour, you have developed a pattern of public health equal to the magnitude of our peoples' needs.

We know how public health evolved from sporadic action against epidemics and communicable diseases to become a continuing concern for environmental sanitation and quarantine; we know how it then moved on to take account of all aspects of ill-health and to give increasing attention to preventive programmes. Now that we have come so far, in the half-century ahead our goal must be nothing less than universal good health -- that positive concept of total health defined in the words of the Constitution of the World Health Organization as a "state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

2. PROSPERITY -- KEY TO HEALTH OPPORTUNITY

Public health is a public concern. As the members of this Association have so long insisted, it embraces everything within the compass of our society that affects mental and physical health.

National Health is founded on national prosperity. Since poverty and ill-health are closely allied, if we are to provide reasonable opportunity for health, we must ensure that our prosperity is shared.

Health and Welfare are closely related and are of national importance. This conviction was underlined five years ago when the Canadian Government created a new Department of National Health and Welfare, with an administrator of Cabinet rank. We believe that in providing for economic security we are providing for good health by guaranteeing better opportunity for acceptable standards of nutrition, housing, clothing, recreation and medical care.