

hospitals, and in particular the reference to the epidemiology division, represents a particular part of the study that is being supervised by the committee of the National Research Council.

This committee of the National Research Council was set up some two years ago to explore the various aspects of this problem.

A number of subcommittees have been established, and it is anticipated that the first report from the subcommittees will be available during this coming summer.

They have investigated the various aspects of the problem very thoroughly, and they feel that the material that will be produced as a report can be used as guide material in hospitals for the control of staphylococcal infections.

With regard to the specific questions Dr. Vivian has asked, I would suggest that we be given an opportunity to prepare formal replies.

The CHAIRMAN: Fine; that is satisfactory.

Mr. HALPENNY: Mr. Chairman, I wish to have some further information with respect to blind persons. Would such questions come under this heading?

The CHAIRMAN: You may proceed.

May I explain to the committee that you have now the opportunity to review any section of the estimates that you might wish. I only ask, for the sake of continuity, that when each section has been exhausted we then proceed to the next one.

Mr. HALPENNY: I see in the estimates that this year we will spend \$4,240,000 on blind persons' allowances.

I wonder if Dr. Davidson would tell us who get these blind persons' allowances. I think in previous evidence he more or less outlined the categories of the persons regarded as being blind, or the amount of blindness.

Dr. G. F. DAVIDSON (*Deputy Minister of Citizenship and Immigration*): Mr. Chairman, first of all might I say that I gave the figure of approximately 25,000 registered blind persons in Canada, being the total population of blind persons in the country at the present time. While that figure may be a thousand or so out, one way or another, I think it states the maximum number of registered blind persons whose existence and whose status is known to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, which maintains the register.

Mr. HALPENNY: Do all these 25,000 receive allowances?

Dr. DAVIDSON: No. First of all, about a third of the total number of blind persons in Canada are over the age of 70. They are therefore receiving the old age security pension, by virtue of their age, rather than by virtue of their blindness.

Secondly, there is a group of approximately 8,300 or 8,400 which benefits from the provision of the Blind Persons Act. That is to say, the federal-provincial program authorized by federal legislation—the Blind Persons Act—under which the provincial governments pay blindness allowances on a means test basis to persons who qualify for it between the ages of 18 and 70, with the cost of that benefit being shared 75 per cent by the federal government and 25 per cent by the provinces.

Mr. HALPENNY: Can you explain the means test in Ontario, or are all the provinces the same?

Dr. DAVIDSON: The means test is essentially the same in all provinces, and it is laid down in the federal legislation, and provides that, for an unmarried person, total income including allowance may not exceed \$1,200 a year.