

than in the overseas Canadian army. This startling revelation was augmented by evidence produced by the Canadian Social Hygiene Council, the leader in the movement (supported by medical health officers and various public bodies) to have the venereal disease problem attacked vigorously. The result was that the dominion government assisted the Canadian Social Hygiene Council (now the Health League of Canada) financially in order to continue its educational work. It also supplemented the provincial appropriations for venereal disease treatment and supervision by substantial grants in aid, with the result that some hundred clinics for treatment were established throughout the country. The necessary drugs were provided, social services created and specialist clinicians appointed. Up to 1937 more than 500,000 persons had received treatment. The effect of all this served to reduce the admission rates of many hospitals for these diseases very materially, in some instances in the case of syphilis by as much as 80 to 90 per cent.

In the year 1931 the Dominion Health Council, representing the departments of health of all the provinces, recommended to the dominion government that the existing plan be extended and grants increased. In spite of this recommendation the then government abolished the division of venereal diseases in the dominion department of health and withdrew the grants to the provinces and to the Canadian Social Hygiene Council. Since then only a fraction of the grant to the voluntary association has been restored.

In view of the fine work accomplished previously and of the urgent need for continuous action if these most sinister of menaces to human life and happiness are to be kept under control, a large deputation visited the dominion minister of health in January and asked that the scheme be restored. Already the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Ontario Health Officers Association, the National Council of Women, and the Dominion Health Council, have approved the scheme.

It goes on to say that federal aid in this field should be reinaugurated without delay.

This grant of \$5,000 is but a fleabite compared with what it should be to handle such a serious problem. The government of this country could well take into consideration the reestablishment in the department of national health of a division of venereal diseases, because money that is expended now in preventive medicine will in the years to come save a great deal of money. Let me give an illustration. A year or so ago, there were 394 cases of what is known as general paresis of the insane. That is due one hundred per cent to the specific disease of syphilis; there is no question about it among the medical men in this country. It costs approximately \$3,000 per person to keep those afflicted with this disease, which is usually fatal, and there we have a cost of \$1,200,000 for a preventable disease among 394 persons who probably could have been cured at an

[Mr. McCann.]

expenditure of ten to twenty dollars apiece. The thing is that clinics should be available to these people, who are ignorant of the modes of infection and who have not the facilities for private treatment, where the disease could be diagnosed and advice and proper therapeutic treatment given. I submit, Mr. Chairman, that this division should be reestablished.

I am not unaware of the fact that there is in the supplementary estimates another appropriation of \$50,000 for the purpose of paying for arsenical treatment in the different provinces. It is not my purpose to discuss that at this particular time, because it may be discussed when the item is before us, but lest I may not be here at that time I should like to suggest to the minister that that appropriation be not confined entirely to that one particular type of treatment, because many are treated by means of mercury and bismuth and other therapeutic agents. If the appropriation definitely specifies that it is to be for one particular line of treatment, the department of health is becoming the doctor instead of the donor.

I should like to say a word with reference to government aid to these voluntary agencies that are doing splendid work throughout Canada for the public health. Of these, the Health League of Canada stands among the foremost. The grant to that body could well be increased another ten or fifteen thousand dollars. My policy with reference to grants to voluntary agencies would be to give them money to help them along, to stimulate their work until such time as it became too much for them, and then it would be taken over by a government agency. The government must be alive to the responsibility which it has to the people as regards the care of their health. It was Disraeli who said that the public health of the country was the first charge upon any ministry. As we become more cognizant of that fact and more fully seized of our responsibilities, the jurisdiction of the federal department of public health will extend over an ever-widening sphere.

Let me commend the minister for having increased the scope of the activities of the public health department. It is indeed gratifying to medical men and to organized medicine throughout the country to know that there has been reinstated a division of maternal and child welfare, that industrial hygiene has become a distinct activity, that there is a branch devoted to epidemiology, and a general extension of those public health activities which the people and the medical profession have demanded and to which they are entitled. I support this grant of \$5,000 to the Health