

6. PUBLIC HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS IN CANADA

In outlining to you the great ramifications of the National Health Programme, and in speaking of all the possibilities that now unfold before us for accelerated advances in the entire field of public health in Canada, I would not wish to obscure in any degree the tremendous achievements that your efforts, the efforts of your predecessors and of all your associates have made possible. The history of the public health profession in Canada is a short but honourable one. In surveying the public health field from the vantage point of this Convention, we cannot help but be struck by the splendid accomplishments of the profession that you represent in all the municipal, provincial and federal health fields and as members of Canada's great national voluntary health agencies.

There are many encouraging entries on the credit side of Canada's ledger of living: the health of the average citizen has notably improved in the past fifty years, and the general death rate has been reduced by over one-third. The onward march of medical science in this country has added nearly an entire generation to the life-expectancy of Canadians.

Because of the close collaboration on all levels of government and because of this parallel development of all health services in Canada there have been many successes. In many fields of health activity, Canada's prestige is world-wide. Much of this progress is proof of the successful work of your profession, for, as a United States authority, Dr. Lewis Dublin, recently said, Canada, even more than his own country, has developed a full-time professional health service in almost every part of the nation.

7. THE INTER-RELATION OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

Canada is among those countries where public health is shifting its emphasis and broadening its outlook to embrace all that affects human life. We now understand that social well-being is an essential and basic consideration of healthful living. It was in recognition of this new concept that the Dominion Government grouped Federal Health and Welfare divisions under a single department.

The composition of the Federal Department of National Health and Welfare is a practical expression of our belief that health and welfare are indivisible. This juxtaposition, however, must not be taken to indicate that, in the public health field, there can be any lessening of the weight of responsibility that must continue to fall on the medical profession.

The almost direct correlation between low income, and malnutrition and ill-health makes a study of the level of national welfare basic to any review of the public health situation.

A closely interwoven network of social welfare measures has slowly been developing across Canada. In the Provinces, there are such basic welfare measures as allowances for mothers, compensation for injured workmen, pensions for the aged and blind, and provisions for child welfare. Municipalities have their own welfare responsibilities - particularly for relief and associated services for the unemployed and for the provision of recreational facilities.

On the Federal level, there are allowances for families, pensions for the aged and the blind, insurance payments for the unemployed, financial support for housing, and a number of measures to assist farmer and veteran and fisherman. All of those are having their important effect on Canadian health.