

the Health League of Canada with reference to the control and elimination of communicable diseases has been an excellent one. The work they have done in this country in connection with diphtheria is one of the outstanding accomplishments in public health work in this or any other country. As a result of toxoid treatment and education along preventive lines, there has not been a single case of diphtheria in the past five years in five cities with an aggregate population of 800,000.

Another one of their formal objects is to cooperate with governments and with the medical, nursing and dental professions and with other associations for furthering the objects of the league. Another object is to promote, organize and assist provincial, local or other branch leagues, associations or organizations having objects altogether or in part similar to those of the league, and whether auxiliary to or independent of the league, and whether incorporated or unincorporated, and to prevent such branch leagues, associations or organizations from designating themselves by names indicating connection with the league without thereby becoming liable for the obligations of such branch leagues, associations or organizations. Another object is to raise funds as provided in the by-laws of the league for the proper carrying out of the objects of the league, and to expend the money so raised in the furtherance of its objects and out of said funds to establish or contribute to any trusts for the carrying out of said objects.

Another aim is to adopt such means of making known the work and operations of the league as may seem expedient, and in particular by advertising in the papers, by circulars, by purchase and exhibition of works of art or interest, by publication of books and periodicals and by granting prizes, rewards and donations. In that particular connection, they have put out a cinema entitled *Damaged Lives*. This has been shown throughout the world to over 5,000,000 people. As a result of the showing of that picture more people have been put upon their guard against a particular type of specific disease and have used preventive measures than could have been convinced by any other method of propaganda.

The affairs of the Health League of Canada are conducted by a board of directors which includes in its membership lay and medical members from all the provinces. The council of the league includes representatives of other associations, appointed members, and representatives of one hundred and ten municipalities. It has branches in Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Vancouver and in various small

cities. Public health education is carried on by means of press releases to most Canadian newspapers and weekly radio broadcasts over thirty-eight Canadian stations, the widespread dissemination of educational literature and the use of motion pictures. As one of the former speakers has said, it publishes a magazine called *Health*, with a circulation of ten thousand. I shall not repeat what has been already said with reference to its organization in 1920, or what has been said with respect to the work which it has carried on, particularly with reference to venereal diseases.

The whole thing boils down to this: whether or not the government of this country recognize the fact that it is good economic policy to spend money on preventable diseases; or do they wish to wait until such time as people are afflicted and then have to spend much more money on their housing and treatment? It has been already pointed out how great is the economic loss, what it costs for hospitalization, and what it costs in terms of the number of days and working hours lost by those who are sick.

With reference to the venereal disease part of the problem I think I can do no better than to read part of an editorial which appeared in *Saturday Night* of a few weeks ago, as follows:

The last twenty-five years of the history of Canada have been years of substantial progress. Not the least notable in the items of this progress have been the advances made in the control of certain diseases to which humanity is subject. Typhoid fever, diphtheria and infantile complaints have to a great extent disappeared. Milk-borne epidemics have become, with the spread of the practice of pasteurization, much less common. Perhaps the most remarkable of the advances in disease control are the reductions of tuberculosis mortality and of the incidence of the venereal diseases. A recent report of one of our large life insurance companies, discussing these advances, remarks that they are all the more remarkable in that they occurred during the period of the greatest war in history, in the face of the most frightful epidemic of modern times, and in spite of the severest period of depression known to the world.

The venereal diseases are a blot on civilization. One distinguished writer, referring to the prevalence of syphilis in the United States, calls this affection "A Shadow on the Land." It is indeed a shadow, particularly in a country of 120 millions which is said to have half a million new cases each year.

Fortunately prompt action on the part of the provinces and the dominion, some years ago, sufficed to exempt Canada, to a considerable degree, from the shadow referred to. During the early days of the great war, when the people of Canada were worried among other things by the rumours that our young men in the army were threatened by the venereal diseases, investigation here and abroad showed that there were, proportionately more cases of syphilis and gonorrhoea in the home population