

Mr. TIMMINS: I have had some unfortunate experiences with respect to that. I am afraid that if anyone differs with me, he will have to speak on the matter. I understand that the civil service here has a plan. That is all very well and I agree with it, but I think the time has come when these plans should be coordinated. There are other factors which go to the root of this whole problem, but the fact is that we should have some plan before us. It is not enough that some business firms in their benevolence arrange proper health protection and sickness insurance for their employees when other firms cannot afford to do the same for their employees.

We all know—and the minister has spoken about this himself—of the sad fact that we are short of hospital beds in every province. A return which the minister made the other day indicates that we are short some 27,000 hospital beds throughout the Dominion of Canada. That is where a start with respect to health insurance has to be made. We have to provide hospital accommodation sufficient to look after the people who are sick if any real progress is to be made in overcoming this problem. In the United States they have already started on a plan. Congress has passed an act appropriating \$3,000,000 for a hospital survey of the whole United States to find out where beds are needed and in what quantity, and another \$75,000,000 has been appropriated for the purpose of building hospitals allocated to various states.

In Ontario a start has also been made. The government of Premier Drew has agreed to pay \$1,000 per bed to help various hospitals provide the accommodation that is needed, and I can say from experience that that programme is already bearing fruit. In Toronto, having regard to the donations received from the city and having regard to the donations received from the province, we have had expansions made in a number of hospitals. The Queen Elizabeth hospital is completing a large extension. The same is true of St. Joseph hospital. The Wellesley hospital has been engaged for the last six months on building and is now completing a large extension. The Mount Sinai hospital has bought a site and is also making a start in providing further accommodation. It seems to me that other governments, other agencies, other countries have stepped ahead of us, and I am saying to the minister that he is a little behind public opinion in respect to health insurance and hospitalization.

There is one other matter I should like to touch on and that is a national health pro-

gramme. Page 23 of the 1946 report of the Department of National Health and Welfare deals with health insurance and a comprehensive national health programme. But on examining the return which was made on May 7 last for the hon. member for Mackenzie, it would appear that the amount which has been spent on planning and organization for a national health programme is very small indeed, something under \$2,500, which is not very much over a period of four years. I would say to the minister and his department that we have been looking for some leadership with respect to these various matters of health insurance and a national health programme and we hoped that such leadership would be reflected in these estimates.

May I close with this summary? First of all there does not appear to be any full time director of health insurance studies. Second, practically nothing has been spent for the last four years in planning and organizing a national health programme. Third, no constructive steps have been taken with respect to health insurance. Fourth, no offer has been made by the dominion to the provinces to implement a national health programme.

There is one other point I should mention. In the return that was made on May 7 last the minister was asked what correspondence had passed, or what offers had been made by the dominion to the various provinces which had concluded tax agreements, to implement any national health programme, and his answer was that no offers to the provinces which had concluded tax agreements had been made to implement any part of the national health programme outlined to the provinces in the 1945 dominion-provincial conference. And so I add that matter to the things which have been left undone.

All the provinces have not made tax agreements with the dominion. Two of the provinces are still without tax agreements. But to my mind that does not limit the responsibility of the minister. I submit that a start should be made in respect of these matters I have mentioned, and I am pointing out to him that with regard to the five items I have mentioned specifically, no start has yet been made.

Mrs. STRUM: I wish to congratulate the minister on calling together the people who are best equipped to deal with cancer and to assure him that I and the group I represent will give him every support in his fight against this dread disease.

There are some other aspects of health that I want to mention at this time, and I do not wish to repeat the arguments put forward so