

# *F.W.I.C. Brief*

## *on Health Services*

**I**N A BRIEF presented to the Royal Commission on National Health Services, the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada asked for five things: "Chronic Patients' Rehabilitation Program, Outpatient Clinics, Homemaker Services, Extension of Nursing Service Under Public Health, Comprehensive Medical and Surgical Insurance." The presentation was made by Mrs. Jas. Haggerty, President F.W.I.C. and Mrs. Clyde B. White, Convener Home Economics and Health F.W.I.C." It was an excellent brief. The excerpts quoted here give some idea of the sound case the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada made for a comprehensive plan of National Health Insurance.

**CHRONIC PATIENTS' REHABILITATION PROGRAM:** "There is need for more chronic hospitals and homes . . . Out-patient clinics could be of service as the treatment could be carried out here; any drastic changes in condition or the need of surgery would necessitate admittance to hospital . . . There is a need for chronic patients' rehabilitation centres with counselling service. There is a need for more homes for the aged. None in the lower income brackets can afford private boarding homes and hospitals."

**OUT-PATIENT CLINICS:** "More out-patient clinics are needed all across the country. These could well be in connection with hospital services. Many tests and simple treatments could be taken care of here; counselling and guidance could be given by a trained staff, thus lessening the demand for doctors' services and telephone calls to doctors' offices. Any change in condition would be referable to the patient's doctor."

**HOMEMAKER SERVICES:** "The primary function of Homemaker Services" (Women capable of taking charge of a household. Ed.) "is to furnish home help to families with children in times of acute illness in the family or where there are convalescent, disabled or chronic cases, and to maintain the routine of the home in time of stress especially if the mother is hospitalized. With a competent homemaker to take charge in the home, a mother would be free to have the necessary operation or treatment when it is needed most; or often a patient could be discharged from hospital to convalesce at home, thus freeing beds for the critically ill.

"Homemakers would need to be carefully screened. Preferably they should be mature

women who have already been successful homemakers in their own right. Good health and stable character, personality and flexibility would be necessary to enable a homemaker to cope with a variety of home situations, especially in homes of mentally retarded or confused persons. Some provinces have a Homemaker Service under Service clubs"; (some under the Red Cross—Ed.); "some have pilot schemes. There is desperate need for a subsidized plan."

**NURSING SERVICE UNDER PUBLIC HEALTH:** The brief recommended a nursing service similar to the Victorian Order of Nurses, the nurse visiting the patient in his or her home to give special care or treatment. "This service," the brief says, "makes it possible for many patients, especially convalescent or chronic cases who might otherwise have to be hospitalized, to be cared for at home, thus freeing hospital beds for those who need more care."

**MEDICAL AND SURGICAL INSURANCE:** "A comprehensive medical and surgical insurance is needed for groups not now covered, at a price they can afford . . . Retired people, individuals not covered by group insurance, are unable to get a comprehensive medical and surgical insurance plan except through private agencies at prices prohibitive to their means. Farmers and small business men could be ruined financially by an extended illness . . . The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada would recommend a blanket service that would include preventive treatment and rehabilitation and which would embrace all branches of medical service, including drugs, medicine and ambulance service."

**CONCLUSION:** The brief concludes with this promise of cooperation in whatever plans may be adopted to improve and safeguard the health of the Canadian people.

"If we are all to enjoy the highest levels of health everyone must work towards this end and support projects and educational programs that emphasize the health and safety of the individual. This is the responsibility of all. The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada would co-operate with other organizations in any Health Care objectives that will encourage and help all individuals and families to keep to a minimum the incidence of illness and the need for health care services.

"The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada will work to secure a balanced health care program facilities and services of the highest standard, readily available and adequate to meet the needs of all Canadians and to ensure that every resident has the needed care when he needs it without consideration of ability to pay the cost at the time of service."