

# WILL COMBAT SOCIAL VICIES

Hon. I. B. Lucas Introduces  
Bill Based on Mr. Justice  
Hodgins' Report

## PROVIDES FOR DETENTION

Advanced Legislation to Meet the  
Problem of Grappling With  
Venereal Disease.

Venereal disease in Ontario is to be fought. The Government's bill providing the machinery was introduced in the Legislature yesterday afternoon by the Hon. I. B. Lucas, Attorney-General. He explained that Mr. Justice Hodgins three months ago was appointed a Commissioner to make a report as to the care of the feeble-minded and as to the best methods of fighting venereal diseases.

He said the Commissioner had gathered the views of many medical men, social workers and others interested in the problem, and the bill now read for the first time was drafted by Mr. Justice Hodgins, after a conference with the Government, as an attempt to grapple with the problem. "It does not attempt to solve all the questions that may arise," said Mr. Lucas, "nor does it assume to go as far as in the end it may be deemed desirable to go, but it does go a considerable distance, and the bill gives wide powers as to the control of patients, subject to certain restrictions. But in a general way it practically throws the whole responsibility for the administration of the act upon the public and municipal health authorities of the Province.

### Evolution of the Details.

"The framework of the bill, in leaving practically all of the details to be worked out by regulations, is a wise course. The work is to be developed under regulations adopted under advice of the health authorities as experience will show what ought to be adopted. The bill itself in broad outline does this: It provides that if any person is under arrest or convicted of any offense of the Criminal Code or any Ontario statutes, he may be examined, and if infected may be treated as the health officers may determine; he may be detained or he may be isolated. The next provision is that where the Medical Health Officer has reason to believe that someone is a danger to the community by reason of being infected, he may require him to produce a certificate from a qualified medical man to the effect that he is not affected. If he fails to do this, the Medical Health Officer may direct an examination, and if he finds the person infected he has authority to treat the patient, detain him, and isolate him if necessary.

"Every hospital receiving aid from the Province may be required to make provision for examination and free treatment of persons suffering from venereal disease.

"The general principle of the bill is away from segregation of affected persons. If it is necessary to confine anyone the patient will not be confined in some special institution set apart for the treatment of that class of disease, for the reason that that would be a bar in the way, and would call attention to the class of patient that went there. In other words it would ear-mark the patient. The patient may be treated as an outdoor patient or as a patient of a hospital.

"No person but a duly qualified medical man shall treat or offer his remedy for that class of disease.

That would not apply to druggists who sell regularly recognized remedies which have the approval of the health authorities. But it would stop the operations of the quack doctor, and would restrict the sale of cure-all medicines. There shall be no advertising of any remedy other than the remedies or medicines approved by the health authorities.

"There are clauses in the bill to prevent publicity from anyone who makes charges or statements, whether true or not true, to the effect that certain persons have been under treatment for the kind in question.

"There is provision for the distribution of literature.

### Assistance of Medical Profession.

"This legislation can only be successful if it has the hearty co-operation and assistance of the medical profession generally throughout the Province. That has been kept in view in the framing of the act. The problem that had to be considered was to not go too far or too fast. The Government had the advice of Dr. McCullough, Provincial Health Officer, and on him largely will rest the responsibility for the regulations and the administration of the act. If the act can be administered successfully the credit will go to the Provincial Health Officer. The act leaves a large part of the action to be taken to regulations, and those regulations are left in the hands of the Provincial Health Officer, subject, of course, to the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The municipal health authorities will have the utmost confidence that under Dr. McCullough we will be able to go along on safe and sane lines and at the same time do effective work.

"We are in a new field of legislation and have practically nothing to guide us. One or two States and one or two countries have made attempts to deal with the problem, but in nothing of this kind has there been any body of experience that will be of any benefit to us. In England forty years ago legislation of a drastic character was attempted, but it was a complete failure, and the law was eventually wiped off the statute books. Before going ahead too fast we must be satisfied we have the support of sound public opinion.

### Care of the Patients.

"The general principle of the bill is that venereal disease shall be re-

cognized as contagious, and the municipalities are made responsible for the care of residents who are unable to bear the expense of treatment. The municipalities must pay for anyone who is unable to pay.

"The Province especially takes authority to make free distribution of any drug or medicine or appliance necessary in order that patients can be properly treated and cared for. I think it is desirable that this bill should be referred to a special committee."

In reply to Mr. Hartley Dewart, as to whether the Government contemplated anything in the way of a special Provincial grant to hospitals, Mr. Lucas said nothing of that kind would be necessary for the present, as the prime responsibility for the treatment of patients rests with the municipality. He added that copies of Mr. Justice Hodgins' report would be ready to-day.