

MARCH 17

# ENSURE HEALTH OF ONTARIANS, KIRBY'S GOAL

## Minister Outlines Plan of Insurance as Link With Dominion Scheme

The broad outlines of a health insurance plan which Ontario is ready to put into operation in co-operation with the Dominion were explained to the Legislature yesterday by Health Minister Harold Kirby. He spoke on the Government's motion to set up a social security committee.

Despite the advances made by Ontario in combating disease, it was his opinion, and those of his officers, that the Province must go still further along the road in health legislation, Mr. Kirby told the House. He expressed the hope that when the Province embarked on a health insurance plan it would not be "just another medical care plan like all the other so-called health insurance programs." It must be a plan to keep the citizens well, not merely to treat them when they were sick, he said.

The Minister admitted that the Province could not go very far alone in financing any large extended program with Provincial revenues curbed for the duration of the war. Extensions must take place with Federal aid, Mr. Kirby declared. In this connection he revealed that during the past few months officials of his department had been in close touch with Ottawa authorities, advising and assisting in the preparation of a Dominion-wide health program.

### "Badly Needed" Services.

Mr. Kirby outlined what he described as "some of the badly needed" health services urgently required for the betterment of health conditions in Ontario. They were: (1) A proper cancer research and treatment foundation; (2) erection of more hospitals for the incurables and convalescent hospitals to relieve overcrowding and congestion in treatment centres; (3) additional accommodation to house the mentally ill, particularly mental defectives; (4) extension of present sanatoria to provide the necessary beds for more tuberculosis patients; (5) the setting up of county health units with a view to education and preventive medicine.

In his brief reference to cancer, Mr. Kirby said this dread disease must be more courageously dealt with than in the past. Regardless of whose responsibility it was to find the money, some action must be taken to set up a proper cancer research and treatment foundation, he asserted.

"While this Province has gone far to assist in the treatment of the disease and has aided in some research, nevertheless Governments must go much further than they have in the past if the ravages of this disease are to be eliminated," said the Minister.

### To Extend Accommodation.

Dealing with the problem of the mentally ill, Mr. Kirby informed the House that the Department of Public Works was now engaged in the preparation of plans for extensions to present accommodation.

As far as tuberculosis was concerned, Mr. Kirby voiced the conviction that if the present program was continued and extended, some day, in the not too distant future, tuberculosis would be wiped out entirely and existing sanatoria would then be used for the treatment of other diseases.

Mr. Kirby visualized a health insurance plan where the relationship between the patient and the physician would be even closer than at present.

"I look forward to a plan where the physician's contract under the scheme will require him to instruct the young mother as to how to keep her infant child developing normally," continued the Minister.

"In this scheme the physician will be paid to protect the pre-school child against communicable disease through a definite program of immunization," said Mr. Kirby. "And it will be his duty when the child is sent home from a school clinic with a note from the nurse or physician, to see that the necessary remedies are applied, whether they take the form of providing glasses or removal of tonsils.

"Such a program to be effective must be national in its scope and must receive Federal support," declared the Health Minister. "The Department of Health in Ontario is in a position to know what will constitute a satisfactory program when we know where the money is coming from to pay the cost."