

ONTARIO SETS \$250,000 ASIDE TO FIGHT V.D.

Health Minister Kirby Declares Condition Grows More Serious

The Ontario Health Department is setting aside \$250,000 for its program to combat venereal disease, "which is daily growing more serious," Health Minister Harold Kirby told the Legislature last night in a Budget debate address. The only contribution made by the Dominion Government toward Ontario's health program since he became Minister in 1937 was \$17,000 worth of drugs toward a venereal disease campaign, Mr. Kirby told the House.

"This year, I understand, the Ottawa Government is to increase its grants to \$140,000, to be distributed among the Provinces," said Mr. Kirby. "This is due to present-day conditions. And well they might. But the sum of \$140,000 divided among the Provinces is an insignificant sum compared to our own yearly budget in this field of work. Our program will cost \$250,000."

Mr. Kirby said the public had been misled into believing that the Federal Government was directing an all-out venereal disease program, while the truth of the matter was that the Ontario Department of Health was merely being subsidized by the "trifling" amount of \$17,000 worth of drugs. The vote for the venereal disease branch last year was \$142,000. It is understood that some of the increased money will go toward hospitalization of sufferers.

Need More Research.

The Health Minister dealt with mental hygiene and stressed the need of more research in this field. In the past four years the department had experimented and carried on research, with the aid of financial assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation, in the field of insulin, metrazol and electric shock therapy. While the results were not all that one might hope for, they were encouraging in that some types of patients were able to leave hospital much sooner than they did under previous methods of treatment.

"Last year, for the first time in a decade, we had a decrease in the total number of patients under treatment at the end of the year," said Mr. Kirby.

Mr. Kirby touched on the success achieved in the control of communicable disease, particularly tuberculosis and typhoid.

"Not only has Ontario, for the first time in history, moved into the position of having the lowest tuberculosis death rate in Canada, but there are actually 264 fewer people dying of this disease in the Province each year than in 1937," said the Minister.

Dealing with problems created by the war, Mr. Kirby said wartime conditions, especially the rapid movement of troops across Canada, as in the air force, had resulted in the introduction of new strains of organisms causing diphtheria.

"I have been requested to loan our experts from the various health divisions to advise or assist in checking the inroads of disease in various parts of Canada," Mr. Kirby said.

Helps War Effort.

"This is not the only way in which the Health Department has assisted the war effort," continued Mr. Kirby. "In addition to granting leave to 72 physicians, specialists in their respective fields, 9 dentists, 48 nurses and 397 other personnel, we have from the outbreak of war placed at the disposal of the armed forces the facilities of our chain of nine laboratories, increasing our facilities to keep pace with the ever-increasing demand, so that a total of 36,000 examinations in the first year of the war has grown to 174,000 examinations last year, with a grand total of over 360,000 examinations for the armed forces to date. To this may be added examinations for the Red Cross blood banks in the Province, totaling 212,552."