

Provincial Health Bill Held Key to 'Sound Plan'

Specified health services partly financed by limited grants from the Province are provided for Ontario municipalities in a bill given first reading in the Legislature yesterday. Introduced by Health Minister Dr. R. P. Vivian, the legislation will enable municipalities or combinations of municipalities to obtain for their residents needed health services.

"The bill is designed to make it possible to render such services as are now available, within the present limitations of our facilities," Dr. Vivian said, "and to create a sound plan for future expansion as desired. It is obvious that an overall Provincial plan at the present time is not possible."

Opposition Leader E. B. Jolliffe questioned introduction of the bill after first reading of a similar Opposition measure. Dr. Vivian explained that the measure had been in course of production by the Government, after extensive survey, since last Aug. 25, and that it goes one step further than the Opposition bill in that it provides for financial aid which only a Government measure could do.

Later, in an interview, Dr. Vivian pointed out: "The facilities for rendering an adequate service are severely limited and restricted at the present time due, first, to the increasing demands on our normal supply because of the war and, secondly, to the fact that our usual facilities in normal times were inadequate to fulfil the proper needs in many areas."

There were 4,480 physicians in

Ontario in 1939 and only 3,665 this year. More than 1,500 doctors are on active service. There have been 1,040 graduates since 1939. A similar situation exists with regard to dentists and nurses and there is a present shortage of 2,325 beds in Ontario hospitals.

"The services required to fulfil an adequate program," Dr. Vivian said, "include those of hospitals for acute, convalescent and chronic care, nurses, physicians, specialists, dentists, etc. These services will be co-ordinated through a Health Services Board, representing the technical and professional personnel performing this task. This board will be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council and will be responsible, through the Department of Health, to the people of the Province."

No Compulsion.

"It is not the Government's intention," he said, "to force upon any area a service it does not desire. In some areas there is satisfactory coverage of some of the residents through their own insurance plans. Where such plans are meeting the needs of these groups it will not be necessary to dispense with them. They might, however, desire to participate in whole or in part in the municipal plan."

The cost, the Minister said, would vary with the services desired, based on sound principles for mutual benefit. The municipality will be able to obtain such services as are available by raising the necessary funds through a choice of taxation.

"At the present time," Dr. Vivian pointed out, "some areas will be unable to raise the money. To assist such areas, the Provincial Government is prepared to pay limited grants based on need. The financial assistance will be increased to aid with additional services when our normal taxing powers are restored and the facilities become available."

"The municipality obtains the specified services at a definite cost by expressing the opinion of its electors through a simple majority vote. The contract for services will be in force for a trial period of three years. It must then be removed by an expression of desire from the area itself. . . . The contract can be terminated by a vote of the people on the same terms as the service was obtained."

Whether the bill to enable municipalities to establish health services is accepted or not, Ontario doctors will continue to pursue their present objective of providing the best possible medical services to the people of the Province, it was stated by Dr. J. W. McCutcheon, secretary of the Ontario Medical Association.

DREW DECLARES DRYS' COMMENT 'INTEMPERATE'

Charges made by the Ontario Temperance Federation against the Provincial Government in connection with the Dominion's withdrawal of beer restrictions were vigorously denied by Premier George Drew in the Legislature yesterday. Rising before the orders of the day, the Premier took warm exception to statements attributed to the Federation in *The Globe and Mail*.

The Federation's statement charged the Ontario Government with failing to co-operate with reasonable requests from Ottawa; with utilizing the situation for party advantage, and with resorting to statements that misrepresented the facts in order to attain the desired end.

"That statement is without the slightest foundation, in fact so far as this Government is concerned," the Premier told the House. "It is to be hoped that the statement issued by Mr. Irwin does not correctly interpret the attitude of other members of the Canadian Temperance Federation. This Government is opposed to intemperance. But intemperance is not limited to any one particular activity of mankind. Intemperance in the use of alcohol and intemperance in public statements are both objectionable."

"The intemperate and inaccurate statement issued by Mr. Irwin will not help to cure the intemperance of another kind of which he complains," the Premier continued. "This Government is not going to be dominated either by beer interests or by intemperate advocates of any special cause."

"The cause Mr. Irwin professes to serve will not be advanced now or at any time by challenging the integrity of those responsible for public affairs without an atom of evidence to support his statements. If, instead of issuing improper statements of this kind, Mr. Irwin would sponsor a vigorous program of education, he could help to further the cause of true temperance and would have the support of all who believe in temperance and not fanaticism."