

March 20

Medical Tests Proposed To Protect Unborn Babies

Described by Health Minister Dr. E. P. Vivian as "another milestone in the progress of dealing with this problem," the Legislature last night gave second reading to a bill which requires that all expectant mothers be given tests to determine whether a syphilitic condition exists. The amendment is to the Venereal Diseases Prevention Act.

"It is important that such tests be taken as early as possible," Dr. Vivian told the House.

Medical authority states, where treatment is begun in an affected case by the fifth month of pregnancy, reasonable assurance can be given that the child will not be born with congenital syphilis. Inasmuch as provision has been made for treatment without cost to the individual where necessary, the requirement contained in this amendment, together with statutory provision elsewhere, can fully protect the new generation.

"The passing of this amendment will result in Ontario being the only Province in the Dominion to enact such progressive legislation," said the Health Minister. "I am informed that nowhere else in this Dominion has such a measure been implemented, not even in Saskatchewan."

"The problem of venereal disease

control is not a simple one," Dr. Vivian pointed out. "Venereal disease is more than a communicable one. It involves social and moral issues that must be taken into account in designing effective controls."

Dr. Vivian reviewed the reorganization steps taken in connection with the venereal disease control division of the Department of Health. The need for knowing very much more about the venereal disease problems statistically was recognized at the time of reorganization, he said. Since April 1, 1944, a detailed analysis has been made on a daily and weekly basis in this division of all cases of venereal disease being reported.

Seven important objectives in the expanded program of the division were outlined by Dr. Vivian. These include adequate medical care for every sufferer regardless of economic position, establishment of health education on venereal disease, development of trained field service with respect to undiscovered cases, stimulation of the local community, protection of homes and families, with emphasis on young people planning marriage, protection of the unborn, advancement of teaching and research.