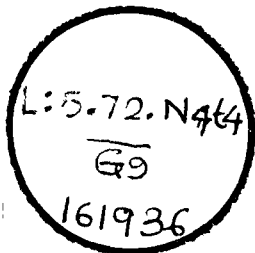


PUBLIC HEALTH

A STUDY PREPARED FOR THE
ROYAL COMMISSION ON DOMINION-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

BY

A. E. GRAUER



OTTAWA

1939

[Appendix II]

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EDITORIAL FOREWORD

In this study Dr. Grauer reviews the development and adequacy of public health services in Canada, and examines their important public finance and jurisdictional aspects. The method of presentation and any expressions of opinion are solely the responsibility of the author, and not of the Commission.

The provinces bear the major responsibility for protecting health, traditionally a function of local government, but the Dominion has some specified duties, chiefly connected with interprovincial and foreign movement (immigrants, seamen and sea passengers, railway passengers, etc.), and with Indians. Dr. Grauer devotes a considerable part of his study to a detailed description of the public health services which have been developed within the framework of the present constitutional and financial system in Canada. He finds many instances of poor organization, lack of co-operation, lack of planning, lack of knowledge, lack of adequate funds at any time, lack of adequate funds at the right time, - and consequent waste. Statistical comparisons between different parts of Canada show wide and unnecessary variations, and the tragic results of grossly inadequate services in many cases. Quite apart from the human factors involved, there are impressive calculations of the economic loss resulting from preventable sickness and death.

In considering the problem Dr. Grauer draws attention to the fact that modern conditions of urban concentration and rapid transportation demand increasing emphasis on preventive treatment and on a much broader front than in earlier times. Suggested steps are an extension of conditional subsidies, more active research, educational work, and leadership by the federal department.

The Dominion grant-in-aid for an attack on venereal diseases (1920-31) is held up as one of the most (and one of the

few) satisfactory examples of a conditional subsidy. This sole experience in the public health field suggests that where specific conditions, fixed by professional standards, can be laid down for a clearly defined object, where the sum involved can be determined in advance, and results can be measured with some exactness, the conditional subsidy may be a useful instrument in attacking both general and special health problems.

Particular attention is drawn to the unsatisfactory position of the Indian wards of the Dominion, and it is thought that many of their problems, such as tuberculosis, could be more efficiently handled by provincial health services.

Beginning with a sketch of the history and present tendencies of public health legislation, which is steadily toward preventive work, Dr. Grauer in Chapter II gives a general description of public health services in Canada. In Chapter III he discusses their scope and adequacy under ten headings. Later parts of the study deal with gaps and overlapping (Dr Grauer finds that gaps are much the more frequent), the cost of illness in Canada and the possibility of reducing it, and the use of conditional grants-in-aid. An appendix (pages 82 to 126) describes in considerable detail all the public health services now given by the provinces and the Dominion.

The first draft of this study was completed in August 1938, and after having been circulated to the Dominion and provincial governments for comment, was revised where necessary and put in its present form in the spring of 1939.

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