

The Order provides a community service, available to everyone in the area served, regardless of race, creed or economic status. The nurses give care on a visit basis to medical, surgical and maternity patients under medical direction. Health instruction is an integral part of each visit. The practical result of nursing care and health education given to maternity patients is seen in the low maternal death rate among those under care. The rate per 1,000 live births attended by the Order during the years 1935-39 (inclusive) was 2.2, compared with a rate of 4.7 for Canada as a whole in the same period (see p. 103 of this edition).

During 1940 the 367 nurses in the field gave nursing care to 87,341 patients. As health teaching is an important function of the visiting nurse, this entry into so many homes provided an unparalleled opportunity to make a worth-while contribution toward the upbuilding of the health of the Canadian people.

The Victorian Order provides skilled nursing care to a large group of people who would otherwise be neglected. The budget of the average man makes very little allowance for the cost of illness. The patient is expected to pay the cost of the visit but service is never refused because of inability to pay. Of the 742,741 visits made in 1940, 57 p.c. were free, 26 p.c. were paid and 17 p.c. were partly paid. The cost of the service to those unable to pay is taken care of by municipal grants and funds collected by means of campaigns.

While the nurses are doing their bit in caring for soldiers' families and helping to keep up the morale of the people, the program has not been changed because of the War. Shortly after war was declared the national executive of the Order stated its policy in these words: "The primary work of the Victorian Order of Nurses, that is, competent nursing in the homes of the people in town and country throughout Canada on a basis adapted to the circumstances of the patient or family, must not be relaxed at this time but rather pressed forward with renewed vigour and determination. Essential home services must not be let down at this time. The Victorian Order was instituted and has been maintained for over forty years with one definite purpose—home-nursing service—for times of war no less than for times of peace".

Section 4.—The Canadian Red Cross Society*

Closely allied with the Dominion and Provincial Governments, both in the prosecution of the War and in the promotion of the health of the people, is the Canadian Red Cross Society. Founded in 1896, its purposes are to furnish volunteer aid to the sick and wounded of armies in time of war and, in time of peace, to carry on and assist in work for the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering.

Present Peace-Time Services of the Red Cross.—Since the inception of the peace-time program in 1920, the Red Cross Society has established outpost-hospital service in 77 centres in Canada's northland. Twenty-four of these have been handed over to their communities, 4 have been found no longer necessary, and, in 1940, 49 were operating under the emblem of the Red Cross. In 1940, Red Cross outposts provided 106,702 days care to 33,404 patients in hospital. Without the aid of these outposts, thousands of our fellow-citizens who gain their livelihood on the fringes of the settled parts of Canada would lack any kind of skilled assistance in the event of sickness or injury.

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