



NEWS DIGEST

of the NEW YORK HEALTH DEMONSTRATIONS

THE need for more adequate records of the health history of children through infancy and the pre-school years, was brought out by Edgar Sydenstricker at a recent meeting of the Statistical Advisory Committee of the Fund. Such data, based upon accurate case records are needed for the study of the diseases common to these ages of childhood, he said. They would undoubtedly reveal the yearly fluctuations and the age incidence of various diseases, and would be useful in formulating programs for preventive measures. The periodic physical examination of pre-school children he indicated as perhaps being the most practical means of securing such material.

The meeting of the advisory committee on statistics, which followed a survey made by Mr. Sydenstricker of the statistical services in operation in the rural and urban health demon-

stration centers, was devoted to the discussion of practical methods for the measurement of not only the gross results of the demonstrations but progress in, and results of, special phases of the programs of these projects.



COMMENTING upon the infancy and pre-school hygiene work of these demonstrations, Mr. Sydenstricker said that the present records indicate a decreasing mortality rate for these children, and that at the ages of four, five and six there are very few deaths. "However," he continued, "many of these deaths are, so to speak, holdovers from earlier attacks. In the first place there is nothing in the records to tell us specifically what is being done to the whole population of pre-school children, and in the second place, we are given no definite information as to

how the children in this group are reacting to what is being done for them.

“For certain diseases it is important to have a record of the monthly number of deaths, extending over a considerable period in the past, because it is otherwise difficult always to forecast the time when an epidemic may be expected. The diphtheria death rate in Syracuse for example, has shown a gradual decrease in the last twenty-five years, having been subject to certain intermediate rises and falls within this period. In 1921, there was a greater outbreak of the disease than had been reported in the preceding twenty-five years. We may expect another rise in the prevalence of diphtheria, unless our protective work is effective within the next two or three years. Diphtheria varies also according to the season, and a background of its periodic and seasonal history is desirable for every health administration.

“The only statistical fact we know about whooping cough, to mention another example, is that there are many cases being reported every few years. The previous behavior of whooping cough has never been

gone into. With information concerning the seasonal fluctuations of various diseases at hand, public health administrators could marshal their forces to better advantage in preparation for a threatened epidemic.”

DURING his recent visit to the three centers of the New York Health Demonstrations, Sir Arthur Newsholme, M.D., K.C.B., stressed the importance of work in the fields of maternity, infancy and child hygiene. “If I were to select any one branch of public health work for special concentration,” said Dr. Newsholme, “it would be effort calculated to promote the welfare and health of the mother and her child in early years.

“In improving the health of the mother and her child in the early years,” he continued, “one can most easily anticipate disease, and bring the work of hygiene out of the region of pathology and disease into that of positive attainment and enhancement of health. Satisfactory care of the mother during pregnancy and of the infant, by means within the reach of all (including a regu-

lated diet, fresh air and sunshine, avoidance of exposure to the infectious colds of adults, and other medical preventive measures), will prevent rickets and many serious ills of childhood.

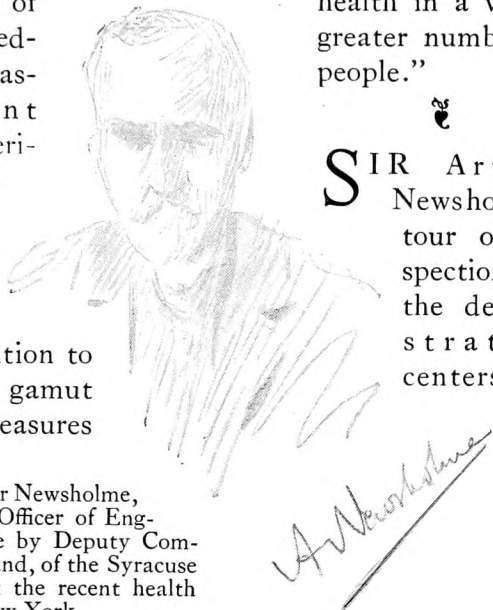
“Concentration upon the care of the mother and her child requires the giving of alert attention to nearly the whole gamut of public health measures

This sketch of Sir Arthur Newsholme, former Principal Medical Officer of England and Wales, was made by Deputy Commissioner George C. Ruhland, of the Syracuse Department of Health, at the recent health education conference in New York.

for the promotion of general sanitation, including the prevention of diseases carried by food, milk and water. But maternal and child health are especially indicated in the prevention of two great scourges of humanity, tuberculosis and venereal diseases. No work for the mother and her child can have more than a fractional result, which does not constantly aim at minimizing and eventually eliminating these two arch-enemies of mankind.

“Evil environmental circumstances which cause excessive

mortality also cause illness and permanent deterioration of health in a vastly greater number of people.”



SIR Arthur Newsholme's tour of inspection of the demonstration centers was

made during the latter part of May, immediately preceding the meeting of the Advisory Council of the Milbank Memorial Fund, held on June third. At this session, which is reported upon in the leading article in this issue of the *Quarterly Bulletin*, Dr. Newsholme reviewed his observations of the organization and work of the various phases of the health programs in each of the three demonstration localities.

A feature of his visit to Syracuse and to Cattaraugus Coun-

ty was an illustrated lecture, "Some Outstanding Problems in the Prevention of Maternal and Child Mortality and in the Prevention of Tuberculosis," given in each instance before an audience of representative lay and professional groups.

While in the United States, Sir Arthur was a principal speaker at the National Health Congress, held at Atlantic City in May. He also delivered lectures at several universities, among them Harvard, Yale, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Chicago. Before sailing, early in June, he made the survey of the work of the New York Health Demonstrations referred to above. He also participated in meetings of the Fund's Technical Board and took an active interest in the conference of health education workers of the demonstrations staffs, held in New York in April.



SIR Arthur was formerly Principal Medical Officer

of the Local Government Board of England and has served as Examiner in Medicine and Public Health at three of the leading universities in England. He is a member of the Council of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and of the General Medical Council.

He is the author of many scientific articles and reports, including "Epidemic Diphtheria; a research on the origin and spread of the disease from the international standpoint"; "The Prevention of Tuberculosis"; "The Prevention of Phthisis, with special reference to its notification to the medical officer of health"; "An Inquiry into the Principal Causes of the Reduction of the Death Rate from Phthisis"; "A National System of Notification and Registration of Sickness"; "The Spread of Enteric Fever by Means of Sewage Contaminated Shellfish"; "The Co-ordination of the Medical Services"; and "American Addresses on Health and Insurance."

