



MILBANK MEMORIAL FUND
QUARTERLY BULLETIN
NEW YORK HEALTH DEMONSTRATIONS

VOL. IV JULY 1926 No. 2

SIR ARTHUR NEWSHOLME REVIEWS
HEALTH DEMONSTRATIONS

*Addresses Members of the Advisory Council following
Visit to Rural and Urban Demonstration Centers*



SIR Arthur Newsholme, M.D., K.C.B., former chief medical officer of the local Government Board of England and Wales, was the principal speaker at a dinner tendered in his honor by the boards of counsel of the Milbank Memorial Fund on June 3, 1926. Dr. Newsholme had just returned from a visit to the rural and urban health demonstrations being conducted in New York State in Cattaraugus County and Syracuse, respectively, and these projects, in part, were commented upon in his address. Principles underlying measurement of public health work was the topic of a talk by Edgar Sydenstricker, Statistician of the United States Public Health Service and Statistical Consultant of the Milbank Memorial Fund.

The public health officer is being urged increasingly to recognize the importance of treatment as a means of prevention, said Dr. Newsholme. Public health work is becoming more and more personal. Work in personal hygiene, in

medical treatment, it has been proven, must be carried on further if many diseases are to be prevented.

At one of the branch centers I visited recently, continued Sir Arthur, I saw a great hospital being erected for cardiac diseases. Although that institution will probably do a great deal of good in studying the conditions and the incidence and the proper treatment of heart diseases, I could not help thinking what an amount of money equivalent to that spent in its operation would achieve if devoted to the prevention of cases of cardiac diseases. We know that many of these cases arise during the pre-school period of life as a later attendant of enlarged

tonsils, and other septic conditions of the mouth and throat, which ought to be treated in childhood. We know that rheumatic fever, if neglected, is a common cause of these heart diseases in adults. We know that syphilis is perhaps the most common cause of heart disease. While devoting our attention to the final result, we should be attacking the diseases of earlier life which cause disablement in middle and later life.

SIR ARTHUR NEWSHOLME made a tour of inspection of the rural and urban health demonstrations in New York State during his recent visit to the United States, from which he has just returned to his home in Croydon, England. During his stay here, he voiced, upon more than one occasion, some of the major considerations confronting present-day public health effort. ¶ In the first article in this issue of the *Quarterly Bulletin* is a brief account of a dinner tendered Dr. Newsholme by the Milbank Memorial Fund's Advisory Council, at which he was a principal speaker.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Albert G. Milbank, Treasurer of the Fund, welcomed the guests which, in addition to Sir Arthur and Lady Newsholme, and members of the

OTHER pages of the *Quarterly Bulletin* are devoted to accounts of conferences of the statistical advisors and of the health education workers of the New York Health Demonstrations. There are reprinted passages from addresses made by Edgar Sydenstricker at these sessions and at the meeting of the Advisory Council. ¶ A tour of inspection of the health work in Cattaraugus County by attendants at the annual meeting of the state and local Committees on Tuberculosis and Public Health of the State Charities Aid Association, held there, is described on page forty-one.

advisory boards, included John N. Glenn, Secretary and General Director of the Russell Sage Foundation, and Barry C. Smith, General Director of The Commonwealth Fund. In the absence of the Chairman of the Advisory Council, Dr. William H. Welch, the meeting was presided over by Dr. Livingston Farrand, President of Cornell University. A feature of the occasion was the announcement by Edward W. Sheldon, President of the Board of Directors, that Sir Arthur

Newsholme had been appointed a member of the Advisory Council by unanimous acclamation.

In seeking to measure the results of public health work, said Mr. Sydenstricker, it is essential that certain fundamental principles of scientific experimentation be observed.

“Referring specifically to the New York Health Demonstrations,” he said, “how are we to measure the results of this rather audacious undertaking? It seems to me that we must recognize the fact that a health program is not a unit—

not a single thing; it is made up of many activities. It is not a single factor which we have introduced into the other conditions that affect health. No single index is an adequate measure of the many phases of public health work. The death rate is never a fair index. It represents the result of factors in years that have gone before over which we have no control whatsoever.

“Let us take tuberculosis as an illustration,” continued Mr. Sydenstricker. “Tuberculosis not a disease that comes in a single attack. Every case has a history of successive stages, and we must realize clearly that our anti-tuberculosis work is divided up into different kinds of activities. One is directed against incipient tuberculosis; another against the advance of cases from the incipient to the active stages; and another is the care of advanced cases.

“The ‘measuring rod’ by which we would determine the result of effort in public health work, let me submit, is not one instrument. It must be many ‘rods,’ because we are doing many dissimilar things. If, therefore, we want to get an adequate measure of what we have done and a fair measure of what we are doing, we must devise the best indices of each thing we are doing. Only in this way can we interpret correctly and helpfully the general results, as expressed in lengthened life or by any other single index.”

