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The NEW YORK HEALTH CONFERENCE
held in connection with the
Fifth Annual Meeting of the Advisory Council



EXPERIENCE mingled with current experimentation in the New York Tuberculosis and Health Conference held in New York City on January 18th, 19th, and 20th, in connection with the fifth annual meeting of the Advisory Council of the Milbank Memorial Fund. Names of national and international reputation in the field of public health stood next on the program to names which will be known in the future for contributions now being developed. New undertakings, described by those who are responsible for them, were evaluated, placed in historical perspective, and related to approved standards, by veteran experts in the service of public health.

The conference was sponsored by the United States Public Health Service; by the New York State Department of Health, the

State Medical Society, and the State Charities Aid Association; by the New York City Department of Health, the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association, and the Bellevue-Yorkville Community Health Council; and by the Milbank Memorial Fund.

The semi-annual meeting of the State Committee on Tuberculosis and Public Health of the State Charities Aid Association and the annual meeting of the Community Health Council of the Bellevue-Yorkville Health Demonstration were features of the program, occupying the luncheon period on suc-

cessive days, and bringing together in each case approximately two hundred persons. The conference was made the occasion, also, for meetings of the Technical Board, the Committee on Nutrition and the Statistical Advisory Committee of the Milbank Memorial Fund, and for the annual conference of the executive secretaries of the local committees with the staff of the State Committee on Tuberculosis and Public Health of the State Charities Aid Association. Four sessions were devoted to the presentation and discussion of certain parts of the health demonstration pro-

OVER 300 workers in the field of public health, many of them of international reputation, participated in the second annual New York Tuberculosis and Health Conference held recently in New York City. Three days were given over largely to discussion of problems which had arisen and progress which had been made in the New York Health Demonstrations.

Opportunity was thus afforded individuals at the head of the activities of the demonstrations to confer with members of the Milbank Memorial Fund's Advisory Council.

grams in Syracuse and in Cattaraugus County.

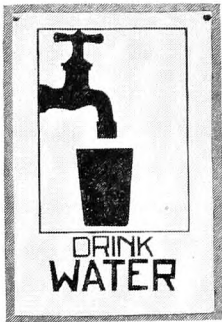
This was the second year that the Advisory Council had met in connection with such a two-day conference. Dr. Wil-

liam H. Welch, of Johns Hopkins University, its Chairman, presided over two dinner sessions of the Council, having previously opened the general conference. The presiding officers of the open sessions of the conference were Homer Folks, Secretary of the State Charities Aid Association; Dr. Herman G. Weiskotten, Commissioner of Health of Syracuse; Miss Lillian D. Wald, President of the Henry Street Settle-

SUMMER vacation means six weeks of health camp life in Allegany State Park for some 140 children, guests of the Cattaraugus County Health Camp. Most of them underweight upon entry, the 1926 campers gained a total of 465 pounds. A brief account of the activities of the Camp is given on pp. 37 to 42. On pp. 43 to 46 is described a three-months summer course offering rural field experience in public health nursing to be given in Cattaraugus County this summer to a selected group of student nurses.

ment; Surgeon-General Hugh S. Cumming, of the United States Public Health Service; and Dr. John J. McGrath, First Vice-Chairman of the Community Health Council.

Speakers at the final session, a dinner meeting of the Advisory Council, described later, were Edward W. Sheldon, President of the Fund's Board of Directors; Hon. Charles G. Hanna, Mayor of Syracuse; Miss Lilla Wheeler, member of the Cattaraugus County Board of Health; Dr. James Alexander Miller, President, New York Tuberculosis and Health Association; Dr. C.-E. A. Winslow, Professor of Public Health, Yale University; and Dr. Livingston Farrand, President, Cornell University.



AT the outset of the rural health demonstration in Cattaraugus County it was decided to make the attack on tuberculosis a major activity. This decision was based not only on the knowledge that tuberculosis is still one of the leading causes of death in the County, and an even more important cause of incapacity and economic suffering, but also on the belief that intensive work for the control of tuberculosis is one of the most effective means for improving the general health of a community.

The service which has been developed was described by Dr. Stephen A. Douglass, County Health Officer and Director of the demonstration, and by Dr. William C. Jensen, who is in immediate charge of the tuberculosis work. They told that there had been (a) 6,500 persons, in a total population of 73,000, examined for tuberculosis in the special clinics of the Department of Health since the beginning of the demonstration in 1923; (b) an increase in the proportion of new cases found to be in the incipient stages, from 17 per cent in 1923 to 40 per cent in 1926, and a corresponding decrease, from 29



per cent to 14 per cent, in the proportion of cases already in an advanced stage when first seen; (c) a growing appreciation of the service by the medical profession of the County, who referred 55 per cent of the cases in 1926, compared with 17 per cent in 1923; (d) an increase in the accommodations at the County sanatorium, and a modification of the popular feeling about it, which together have doubled the number of days' treatment; and (e) a decrease in the number of deaths from tuberculosis in the County, from an average of 50 for the decade preceding the beginning of the health demonstration to 35 in 1925 and 37 in 1926.

The significance of these facts was summarized by Dr. Allen K. Krause, Director of the Kenneth Dows Foundation for Tuberculosis Research at the Johns Hopkins University, who had recently spent ten days in the County studying the work. It "has taught the shut-in dweller in the remote mountain homestead," he said, "that consumption need not kill; it has converted the County sanatorium from a domicile of despair into a house of hope; it has helped wonderfully to



stimulate and inspire that hard-driven Angel of Mercy, the country doctor, and put at his right hand for service that other ministering spirit to the sick, the public health nurse."

Dr. Lawra-

son Brown, Medical Director of the Trudeau Sanatorium, expressed the hope that Cattaraugus County would find a way, as part of the demonstration, to reach every child of high school age in the County for a thorough examination. It is his opinion that if all boys and girls during the ages from ten to twenty could be examined annually, including X-ray examination, 90 per cent of the tuberculosis of early adult life could be prevented. Dr. Edward R. Baldwin, Director of the Trudeau Foundation, also emphasized the value of the X-ray; the importance of examining children of high school age year after year; the danger of reaching a diagnosis too soon; and suggested providing opportunities for country doctors to visit clinics and institutions and attend institutes, as profitable measures in a rural anti-tuberculosis program.



HOW urban methods for safeguarding the life and health of mothers and babies might be “reconstructed and modified” for rural practice was discussed by Dr. Doris A. Murray, who is in charge of this work in Cattaraugus County. The lack of adequate hospital accommodations for maternity cases and the difficulty of reaching women in the early stages of pregnancy, present problems of larger proportion in the country, said Dr. Murray. She emphasized also the importance of enlisting the co-operation of the family physician in carrying out this phase of a public health program. Dr. J. H. Mason Knox, of the Maryland State Department of Health, mentioned, in commenting on her paper, that the optimum age for interesting girls in instruction for parenthood seems to be from ten to thirteen, and for boys, a little later, that is during the elementary school years.



METHODS employed in Cattaraugus County in overcoming the difficulties encountered in providing a public health nursing service for a rural population scattered over 1,300 square miles, were described by Miss Laura A. Gamble, Director of the Bureau of Public Health Nursing of the County Department of Health. Rural conditions in America, in Miss Gamble's opinion, require public health nurses who are equipped to give whatever nursing service may be needed, rather than specialists trained for service in some one field. They must give bedside care, as well as advice and instruction. They must do also what in cities is left to specialists in social service. "In the city," she said, "the family case-worker, the public health nurse, the school attendance officer, the probation officer or recreation leader, may all co-operate advantageously in working out a family problem; but in rural districts the long distances and the expense of transportation make such a method of work impracticable even if the services of all these different workers were available." Furthermore, rural public health nurses must be executives and organizers, as well as competent nurses, knowing how to work with committees and enlist public interest and build up support for a health program.

A staff of fifteen field nurses attached to the County Health Department serves the villages and country districts. They are stationed at six health centers in different parts of the County, and they do generalized nursing, under the supervision of specialists in the various branches of nursing and in nutrition, and also under the supervision of the trained social workers attached to the County Tuberculosis and Public Health Association. They assist at clinics; they visit the schools; they give instruction to various groups. In the course of the year 1925 they made 22,000 visits in the homes of the County. Their visiting time was divided as follows: 35 per cent in the interest of maternity, infancy, and child hygiene; 20 per cent in tuberculosis service; 20 per cent in school service; 16 per cent for general health and hygiene, including bedside nursing; and 9 per cent on account of communicable diseases. For their own instruction lectures and conferences are arranged from time to time. Teaching material and outlines for their classes are also provided.

On the basis of this experience and of an estimate of needs not yet met, Professor C.-E. A. Winslow reached the conclusion that for complete and effective service in a rural community the ratio of public health nurses to the population should be 1 for every 2,000 residents. He said, moreover, that in view of the higher costs necessitated by the rural conditions, an annual expenditure of from \$1.00 to \$1.25 per capita must be contemplated if an adequate service is to be provided. As in the case of roads and education, part of the expense, in Dr. Winslow's opinion, should be met by the more prosperous sections of the commonwealth through the system of state aid. For a country so prosperous as the United States to maintain that it is too poor to protect the health of its rural population is to display a poverty of spirit of which I can not believe the American people capable, he concluded.



HOW to translate the knowledge of the experts into the daily practice of the people, the subject of a special session, was characterized by Surgeon General Cumming as perhaps the most important on the conference calendar. The public health education program which has been developed in Syracuse was pronounced by Dr. Donald B. Armstrong, Assistant Secretary of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, to be probably more comprehensive and more nearly adequate than could be found in any other city of equal or larger size. Its methods and underlying philosophy were presented by Miss Louise F. Bache, Acting Director, Bureau of Health Education of the Department of Health. Miss Mary E. Bowen, of the Department of Public Instruction, told of the educational devices used in the Syracuse public schools, from kindergarten through the sixth grade, to teach children what they should know about health, and to establish proper habits of living and the proper attitude toward health—devices adapted to the age of the children, and correlated in most ingenious fashion with other subjects in the curriculum. Miss Teresa M. Fields, Supervisor of Health Education in the metropolitan health demonstration, told of plans which were being made for the furtherance of health instruction in the schools of the Bellevue-Yorkville district in New York City.

The "weaving of health into the curriculum" was cited by Bailey B. Burritt, General Director of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, as perhaps the most significant element in present efforts to teach health to school children. Frederick R. Rogers, of the State Department of Education, pleaded for a nation-wide

program of research to determine experimentally, on a scientific basis, what ought to be taught, where in the grades each element ought to be introduced, and how it can be taught most effectively.

The allied topic of the discovery and correction of physical defects in school children was presented by Dr. Joseph C. Palmer, who directs vice in both the parochial Syracuse, and Greenleaf, the Cattaraugus School Health



the health service public and the schools of by Dr. C. A. Director of gus County Service.

In Syracuse defects serious called to the the parents

physical de-enough to be attention of were found in

49 per cent of the 9,290 public school children, examined in 1925-6, an average of 1.44 defects for each child in the group. Fully half of these defects had not been suspected by the parents, Dr. Palmer said.

Dr. Greenleaf showed that, despite the lack of clinical facilities, it had been possible to make very creditable progress in securing the correction of certain classes of defects found among children in the rural schools of Cattaraugus County. To make the organization in rural districts more effective, Dr. Greenleaf said that a law was needed providing for the substitution of the school district, including fifty or sixty schools, as the operating unit in place of the individual school. The adoption of this proposal, said Dr. William A. Howe, State Medical Inspector of Schools, would be one of the greatest contributions that could be made at the present time to the promotion of health work in the rural schools.



AT the final session of the conference, a dinner meeting of the Advisory Council, Mr. Sheldon's address of welcome to the Council members and other guests present, was followed by a brief speech from the presiding officer, Dr. Welch. "Isn't it true," Dr. Welch asked, "that we are making lives more useful and happy by prolonging them? Riddance of mosquitoes, for example, means riddance of malaria, and riddance of both means a more happy and useful life for an entire population," he added. Following a review by Mr. Folks of recent developments in the rural and urban health demonstrations, Miss Wheeler of Cattaraugus County and Mayor Hanna of Syracuse talked on the public health outlook in these localities. Dr. Miller discussed the metropolitan demonstration in relation to the outlook for public health in New York City, and Dr. Winslow enumerated instances in which opportunities were confronted to add to the current store of world knowledge and experience in public health administration. Dr. Farrand said he did not think it unreasonable to hope that its advances in preventive medicine would eventually bring to the United States such leadership in the field of public health as it now enjoys in the economic world.





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—C. E. A. WINSLOW, PH.D.