



NEWS DIGEST

of the NEW YORK HEALTH DEMONSTRATIONS

IN his message to the New York State Legislature on January 4, 1928, Governor Alfred E. Smith again stressed the advantages of the county as a unit for the administration of public health work. Sketching briefly the history and present status of local public health administration in New York State he urged other counties to follow the example of Cattaraugus and avail themselves of the financial aid which the State has provided for the maintenance of public health programs under local auspices and under the direction of full-time local health officers.

An "important public health statute enacted in 1921 permits the establishment of county health departments," Governor Smith reminded the Legislature. "Our knowledge of preventive medicine has reached the point where for best results its administration should be in the hands of a qualified full-

time expert in this field. Towns and villages with but few exceptions cannot afford such service. So far but one county in the State (Cattaraugus) has taken advantage of this law, but others are giving it serious consideration, and it is to be hoped that the time is not far off when local health administration throughout the State may be in the hands of full-time qualified county health officers.

"New York is a laggard in this respect. In the entire country there were on January 1, 1927, 337 county health departments, one state alone having forty-seven.

"It must be borne in mind that for thoroughly effective health work the State must have the full cooperation of the localities. The counties should do their share. The State stands ready to give financial and other aid, but unless there is a live, local interest in the public health problem the desired

progress is difficult to make.

"We have proved the slogan of the late Hermann M. Biggs, State Commissioner of Health in my first and part of my second administration, who was probably the foremost authority on the subject of public health in this country. He said, '*Within natural limits, public health is purchasable.*' The history of the last ten years of the State Health Department and its statistics prove the soundness of this theory."



DURING the past five years the death rate from tuberculosis in Cattaraugus County has declined approximately one-third. The significance of this decline will be discussed by Edgar Sydenstricker in the April *Quarterly Bulletin*. The article is one outcome of studies which Mr. Sydenstricker and his staff are making

of the vital statistics of Cattaraugus County and Syracuse. These studies include researches into: (1) the effect of non-resident births upon the birth rate of Cattaraugus County; (2) the effect of the inclusion of non-resident deaths on the infant mortality rates of Cattaraugus County, 1921-1927; (3) natality in Cattaraugus County, 1916-1927; (4) infant mortality in Cattaraugus County, 1916-1927; (5) maternal mortality from specific causes in Cattaraugus County, 1916 - 1927; (6) tuberculosis mortality in Cattaraugus County, 1916-1927; (7) the use of school medical examiners' records in measuring results of pre-school and school health work; (8) a study of measles epidemics in Syracuse, 1916-1927; and (9) the incidence of communicable diseases by age and sex in Syracuse 1917-1927.

