



FIVE YEARS *of* HEALTH DEMONSTRATION *in*
CATTARAUGUS COUNTY—*A SUMMARY*



THE Cattaraugus County Health Demonstration was inaugurated on January 1, 1923. Shortly thereafter the Cattaraugus County Board of Health was officially appointed, the service of a full-time county health officer secured, and New York State's pioneer county health organization thus established. In financing the first five years development of the County's public health program, the State of New York, the County itself, local voluntary agencies, and the Milbank Memorial Fund have participated—the State and local bodies contributing on an increasing scale and the Fund on a diminishing scale, since the complete organization was set up. There is presented here a summary of the health services which have been established in Cattaraugus County and of improvements in health conditions which have taken place there during the last half-decade.

1. A *tuberculosis service*, in charge of a qualified diagnos-

tician, cooperating with local doctors, aided by trained nurses under the supervision of a special tuberculosis supervisor, has been carried on since early in 1923. In the course of the past five years 7,171 persons have been examined as a result of this newly established service. Of these, 847 were found to have tuberculosis in various stages of the disease, and a very large proportion of them have been brought under medical and nursing supervision either in sanatoria or in their homes. At the beginning of the demonstration in 1923, there were only 135 of these cases of tuberculosis known in the County; and those that were known were under the supervision of two nurses for the entire County including the City of Olean. There are now nineteen nurses available for this and for other services. The cooperation of the private physicians of the County has gradually become the largest factor in the finding of new cases. Cases referred by physicians to the clinics increased from 14 per cent in 1923 to 39 per cent in 1927. While for twenty-two years prior to the demonstration (1900-1922), tuberculosis mortality in the United States registration area and in New York State was showing a marked decline, the death rates for this disease in Cattaraugus County showed practically no downward trend. For one year, in 1915, the rate dropped to 50.1 deaths per 100,000 population, but that was an isolated event. The average tuberculosis death rate in the County for the period 1900-1922 was 71.7 per 100,000 population. In 1923 it was 68.1; in 1924 it was 63.6; in 1925 it fell to 45.3; and in 1926 it was 43.7.* In 1927, it dropped to 42.1 per 100,000 population. These three successive low rates of 1925, 1926 and 1927 constitute an event which has not before been paralleled at any time since the recording of

*All of the rates given here have been corrected to exclude Indians on the Reservation and non-residents at the J. N. Adam Memorial Hospital, which is a Buffalo institution maintained for patients residing outside of Cattaraugus County.

deaths from tuberculosis was inaugurated in Cattaraugus County.

2. In 1923 the Board of Supervisors made a special appropriation to be used for the *elimination of bovine tuberculosis* from the many herds in this dairy County, with the understanding that the Milbank Memorial Fund through the County Board of Health would assist in the work. Accordingly upon advice of its Technical Board, the Milbank Fund appointed a Bovine Tuberculosis Advisory Committee, consisting of Dr. Theobald Smith, the director of the Department of Animal Pathology of the Rockefeller Institute, chairman; Dr. William H. Park, director of the Bureau of Laboratories of the New York City Department of Health; and Dr. Veranus A. Moore, dean of the Veterinary School of Cornell University. This committee assisted in formulating comprehensive plans and in securing increased cooperation and participation by the state and federal authorities, to rid the herds of Cattaraugus County of tuberculosis. During the past five years the percentage of cattle reacting to the tuberculin test has been reduced from 10 per cent to 0.8 of 1 per cent. The deaths from non-pulmonary tuberculosis have averaged one-third of what they were during the preceding nine years. Dr. Moore estimates that the value of cattle in Cattaraugus County has increased by approximately \$1,000,000 as a result of the tuberculin testing and eradicating of bovine tuberculosis.

3. A *bureau of communicable diseases* was established and a municipal *diagnostic laboratory* was enlarged to serve the entire County—to seek out typhoid carriers, to control outbreaks of smallpox, to immunize children against diphtheria, and to aid the physicians and local health officers in prompt and accurate diagnoses and in the control of communicable diseases generally. We are informed that this service is

used by every practicing physician in the County. Among many other results, attained with the cooperation of the physicians, should be mentioned the placing under supervision of typhoid carriers in order to prevent further spread of this always serious and often fatal disease; and the immunization from diphtheria of 4,467 school children, representing 53 per cent of all the children in the rural schools of the County under ten years of age.

4. The Board of Health established a *maternity, infancy and child health service* under the direction of a trained specialist who is cooperating with similar state and federal health services in attempting to utilize in Cattaraugus County methods employed by health departments of worldwide reputation to reduce maternal and infant mortality and to safeguard the health of the preschool child. The effectiveness of this service depends largely upon the cooperation of the local doctors which in the main has been cordial. The infant mortality rate in Cattaraugus County has for the last four years averaged 66.2 (per 1,000 live births), which is a decrease of 23 per cent from the average of 85.7 (per 1,000 live births) for the four previous years.

5. The Cattaraugus County Board of Health has a *social hygiene service* which has discovered and brought under care and supervision many unrecognized sources of venereal disease infection, and which is working not only to cure these diseases but to prevent their spread. These results have been achieved with the cooperation of the local doctors.

6. The Health Board has developed *mental hygiene* clinics and tests and through social workers and field nurses discovered nests of degeneracy due to feeble-mindedness. Such cases have been brought to the attention of the County Court; prosecutions for numerous offenses, including incest, have resulted; and many cases of feeble-mindedness have

been sent to appropriate state institutions. The courts and voluntary agencies have cordially cooperated in this work.

7. The Board has a *generalized nursing service*, consisting of nineteen nurses, headed by a trained and efficient director, aided by four nurses who are specialists respectively in tuberculosis, maternity and child hygiene, school hygiene and venereal diseases. This service has been chosen as a field training center for graduate students of nursing in Teachers College, Columbia University. The nurses have aided the County Association staff, the teachers, the State orthopedic nurses, surgeons and others, in studying the needs of some 200 crippled children in the County, many of whom have as a result been restored to normal condition. During the past five years these messengers of mercy have made 98,806 calls, travelling in their Ford cars 550,000 miles to aid the local doctors generally in caring for the sick. Under the direction of the physicians they have provided nursing supervision for patients with tuberculosis and other communicable diseases treated in the home. They have assisted in maternity cases, provided nursing service in the clinics for discovering and treating venereal diseases and in the schools for the examination of school children. They have been an active factor in securing the correction of defects found in the medical examinations of school children and in the campaign of health education.

8. There is also a county supervisory *school health service* operating under the educational law of the State, working in close cooperation with the County Board of Health. In 1923 under the general supervision of this service, the school physicians examined 7,758 rural school children in the County and discovered 15,038 physical defects. By the end of June, 1926, one-half of these defects had been corrected. This work was done largely by the physicians of the County,

the nurses having followed up the parents of the children and urged that it be done. The county supervisory school health service is responsible, in the rural schools, for the promotion of the teaching of health, for measures leading to the early detection of communicable diseases, for instruction in nutrition, and for the sanitation of school buildings and premises. The local doctors in the County have cooperated actively in this service since its beginning.

The Milbank Memorial Fund initially entered into cooperation with the public authorities of Cattaraugus County to develop during a five-year period a scheme of public health service based upon the knowledge and experience of the leading authorities of the country and designed to prevent needless sickness and premature death among the people of the County. At the request of the County Board of Health and some forty other local bodies, official and voluntary, the Fund is continuing its participation in the health demonstration during the current year.

