

NEWS DIGEST

of the NEW YORK HEALTH DEMONSTRATIONS

THE first two of a series of monographs on specific phases of the work of the Cattaraugus County Health Demonstration, "Improving the Dietary Habits of a Rural Community" and "School Health Work in Cattaraugus County," will shortly be ready for distribution, and either one or both will be sent free, upon request, to any reader of the Quarterly Bulletin. These monographs make no attempt to appraise the accomplishments of the demonstration or of any of its services. Their purpose is rather to make available to rural counties in New York and elsewhere a record of the techniques employed in setting up and administering, on a county-wide basis in a rural community with a widely scattered population, programs in nutrition and in school hygiene.

"Improving the Dietary Habits of a Rural Community" is by Miss Ruby M. Odell, who was, for the first two of the

three years covered by the story, the nutrition supervisor employed on a temporary basis by the local County Board of Health to teach the fundamental principles of nutrition to its staff members and other community workers in order that they might in turn teach others. When the nutritionist undertook the work in Cattaraugus County a study of the records of physical examinations made in the diagnostic clinics conducted by the County Board of Health in various parts of the County showed that a large number of adults and preschool children were suffering from physical disorders apparently due to poor food habits. The findings of the physical examinations of Cattaraugus school children, showing that 10 per cent of the city and 25 per cent of the rural school children were 10 per cent or more underweight, also indicated the need for the services of a nutritionist.

As an approach to discover the causes of the dietary ailments from which these individuals were suffering the record shows how the nutritionist, with the assistance of leaders of the thirty local groups of Home Bureau women, members of the home economics classes of the high schools and of the public health nursing staff, selected and made a study of the dietary habits of 100 representative Cattaraugus County families, containing a total of 479 persons. Starting with these survey findings an educational program in nutrition was subsequently developed, the dietary faults revealed determining for the nutritionist the chief points of emphasis. The program undertook three principal types of activities—service to individuals suffering from dietary ailments, a program of adult education, and a school health program. The methods used in administering this program are described in detail and show that a number of unique features were employed, among which was the self-teaching plan adopted by the local Home Bureau groups. Services to individuals and to groups of underweight school children were limited, the great-

er part of the nutritionist's time being systematically apportioned, ten days monthly with the school teachers, eight days with the nurses, and four days with the Home Bureau, teaching particularly the dietary needs of the school child.

The record, though making no attempt to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the nutrition program, does give a few concrete figures on activities that can be measured quantitatively, and these figures, together with the findings of a re-survey of the families whose dietary habits were studied in the original survey to determine what changes had been effected in their food practices, present some idea of the work accomplished from April, 1924, to January, 1928, when in accordance with the original plan, responsibility for the nutrition program was transferred to the public health nursing service and to the teachers, special activities promoted by the nutritionist being merged with other general health activities of the County Board of Health.



AN account of the experience during its formative years of the first county-wide school health program in rural New

York is contained in "School Health Work in Cattaraugus County" by Dr. C. A. Greenleaf, director of the Cattaraugus County School Health Service. This story has special significance when it is remembered that the school health service established in Cattaraugus County in 1923 on a voluntary basis was, the year following, reorganized as the State's first official supervisory school hygiene district under the provisions of the permissive law passed that year (New York State Law, Chapter 194, Section 577-b).

The record reviews the detailed steps by which there was devised and set up, at a cost which it is believed the community can afford to maintain permanently, a county-wide school health program adequate to meet the needs of a rural county with an annual school population of approximately 17,948 children unevenly scattered over a wide area of 1,343 square miles in 299 schools of varying size and equipment, 232 of which are one-room district schools so typical of rural sections throughout the country. The story tells how those responsible for establishing the school

health service coped with the perplexing problem of providing adequate personnel and transportation facilities in a county where the distances between schools are great and where many of the country roads, poor enough in summer, are almost impassable in the winter; and how an administrative organization was effected to meet the varied health needs of the 299 city, village and rural schools without dealing separately with the 269 independent local school districts.

To discover and secure correction of the physical defects of the children and to conserve and promote individual health, the school health program provided medical and nursing service, limited service in dental hygiene and nutrition, special services from time to time, and a program of health instruction. The methods by which these services were staffed and the way in which they functioned under the supervision of a part-time medical director and a full-time county school nurse is adequately told in the record.

Through a county-wide physical examination survey, the technique of which is de-

scribed, 10,000 defects, serious enough in the examiners' opinions to warrant immediate attention, were found among the rural school children outside of the cities of Olean and Salamanca. In the twenty-two city schools where medical inspectors and nurses had been employed before the advent of the County school hygiene service, the children were on the whole found to be in better physical condition than were those in the rural schools. This discovery released the energy of the school health administrators for intensive work in the rural districts, where, during the two school years included in the study, their efforts were devoted to securing corrections of the physical defects discovered through the survey. To this end, the three principal follow-up methods used were: (a) correspondence with the parents of children having physical defects; (b) general publicity urging medical attention for school children in need of it; and (c) nursing service in the homes and schools.

The record contains a summary of the work accomplished which shows that excellent progress has been made in carrying out the principal features

of the initial school health program. Accomplishments that lend themselves to measurement are recorded, but no attempt is made to draw conclusions as to the ultimate benefits that the children of Cattaraugus County will derive from the work. The story is of a school health program still in the process of development.

UNDER the title, "An Attempt to Eradicate Bovine Tuberculosis from Cattaraugus County," an article by Dr. Veranus A. Moore, dean of the New York State Veterinary College of Cornell University and a member of the Advisory Committee on Bovine Tuberculosis of the Milbank Memorial Fund, appeared in the June issue of *Veterinary Medicine*. The article contains an historical account of the measures developed to eradicate bovine tuberculosis from the County's 80,000 dairy cattle, distributed in 4,205 herds, and shows how the Cattaraugus County Farm and Home Bureau Association, in cooperation with the local County Board of Supervisors secured the cooperation of the Federal Bureau of Animal Industry, the New York State

Department of Farms and Markets, and the Milbank Memorial Fund in the work, to the end that a safe milk supply might be insured to the people of Cattaraugus County.

As a result of the campaign to eliminate tuberculosis from Cattaraugus County cattle, 11,451 infected animals have been removed from the herds of the County and infection has been reduced from 10.3 to 0.99 of 1 per cent. Dr. Moore states that although the progress of testing the cattle in the County has been beset with many difficulties, the wholehearted cooperation of the practicing veterinarians, the Tuberculosis Committee of the Board of Supervisors and the County agent, with the Federal and State authorities, has enabled cattle owners to have their herds tested and the reactors removed to a greater extent and within a shorter time

than in most other counties in New York State. Dr. Moore anticipates that practically all, if not all, of the infected herds will test clean this spring and fall. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Mr. C. N. Abbey, the present Cattaraugus County agent, has pointed out in a recent report that the elimination of bovine tuberculosis has been of much economic value to the County as it has increased the market value of the cattle from ten to twenty-five dollars each.

At the request of the Cattaraugus County health officer, Dr. R. M. Atwater, the Advisory Committee on Bovine Tuberculosis of the Milbank Memorial Fund visited the County recently to consider with the local authorities a number of questions that have been raised in the County regarding further steps toward the protection of the local milk supply.

