

May 8.—Doing well. Very little bile seen now.

June 2 —Left hospital for her home in the country. Feels and looks well. Bile has ceased to be discharged. Stools normal in color. Wound about healed.

Remarks.—As far as I can learn from the literature of the subject at my command, it must be very seldom that a gall-stone is found impacted in the common duct, where no history of gall-stone colic can be obtained and no pain worth mentioning accompanies the dyspeptic symptoms present in such cases. This patient would only admit that she felt some *soreness* in the upper abdomen after her attacks of vomiting.

With steadily increasing jaundice and loss of flesh, one would naturally strongly suspect the presence of a malignant or other growth obstructing the common duct. I have myself seen a very small tumor producing such symptoms and finally causing the death of the patient.

The deepening of the jaundice, together with the rigors, would perhaps favour to some extent the diagnosis of gall-stones, but these being largely due to cholangitis with infection might also be met with in the case of a growth obstructing the lumen of the duct, and setting up an inflammation there.

Finally, this case serves to show how important it is to make an exploratory opening, in order to clear up any doubt as to diagnosis in a serious abdominal condition. When such a course can be pursued with so little risk, as at present, we believe that the patient should more frequently get the benefit of this procedure, and that before he or she becomes so reduced as to render one unfit to stand any further operative measures which may be required to effect a cure.



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*Original Communications*

THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT IN NOVA SCOTIA.\*

By A. P. REID, M. D., Middleton, N. S.

Our health laws are of comparatively recent and slow growth, and not until Dr. Wm. McKay of Cape Breton gave attention to it in his place in the House did it assume its present form. The next advance was at the instance of the Hon. W. S. Fielding, Provincial Secretary, who instituted the *Provincial Board of Health*, which body inaugurated the Provincial Bacteriological Laboratory, the value of which to the province and profession it would be needless for me to dwell on as you are individually intimate with its work. At its inception it was under the charge of Dr. W. H. Hattie, now superintendent of the Nova Scotia hospital. On his resignation the work was continued by the late much lamented Dr. Halliday, and is now most successfully carried on by our confrere, Dr. L. M. Murray.

The third step in progress was the requirement that every municipality and town should appoint a health officer.

At the instance of the Nova Scotia Medical Society last year the Provincial Board of Health was abolished, and in its place the administration of the health laws is made a Department under the Provincial Secretary with an executive officer styled *Provincial Health Officer*.

Our health laws, if carried out in spirit or even in letter, would be fairly satisfactory, but it takes time to educate the public up to its requirements. The ordinary response to new regulations is "we have got along very well hitherto, why change;" and again the question of expense causes a great desire to hang back in the enacting and carrying out of the law. For every amendment leading to increased efficiency means an increased expense, and hence abnegation of demands for hygienic improvement. Nor do I think we will have our statutes complied with until the public are so educated that they will fully appreciate the facts in pathology that have been so definitely established during the past few years.

So long have people suffered from tubercle, diphtheria, pneumonia, typhoid and eruptive fevers, infantile diarrhoea, cholera nostras, etc., that they look at them as they do at the weather as a dispensation beyond their control and put up with it.

All public health acts are based on the assumption that these contagious diseases, which chiefly swell our mortality lists, and as well grievously increase our financial losses, are avoidable, and that compliance in letter and spirit with the act would place them not only

\*Read before Meeting of Maritime Medical Association, Halifax, July 7th 1904.

under control but in the end exterminate them. Until the public thoroughly appreciate the facts, the carrying out of the health acts will be beset with difficulties.

I have so far not mentioned smallpox as I look on it as the most easily controlled of all infectious diseases and at the present time adds but few cases to the mortality lists. To some extent it is a blessing in disguise, because its onset is so insidious and its outbreak so pronounced that it startles the community and causes an effort (too often spasmodic) to carry out hygienic laws. I fear however that many thousands of our people have yet to die from preventable disease before the proper means are adopted for the preservation of human life, which so far as the community is concerned seems to place a much higher estimate of that of the beasts of the field. Until it is generally recognized that a death from tuberculosis means ignorance or carelessness, on the part of the deceased or his advisers—or both—and the same may be said of other infectious diseases.

The question which really presents itself is—How may we educate the people? No doubt much can be done by visits, lectures and demonstrations, but I have little hope that much headway will be made with our present adult population; hence we must look to the instruction of the coming generation and to do so, the public school must be our main resource. This, if judiciously managed, should ultimate in success and here it may be in order to give a quotation from my last report to the government.

“The above considerations in the most marked manner emphasize this fact, that the government, the school authorities, and the people should insist that an adequate system be adopted to the end that the coming generation may be so educated that they may avoid the many pitfalls that the present one is foundering through.

The public school is the only means available that presents itself to me, and regular and definite sanitary instruction should not only be given to every pupil but so instilled into his mind that he will not forget it, but also that he will feel an individual interest in it; that it is for his own private use, neglect of which brings condign punishment.

We now have health readers, all very good in their way, but they do not reach down to this practical point.

#### HOW TO AVOID DISEASE.

It is of a certain value to know something about the heart, muscles, bones, nerves, brain, etc., that in life enables us to perform our varied duties, but of much more value.

To know what causes tuberculosis (the great white plague, so-called,) and what we know of the tubercle bacillus, its mode of propagation and tenacity of life.

To know how vaccination protects from smallpox. The press of the

future may thus be spared many inanities that now appear from time to time.

To know that the pneumococcus pneumoniae is always with us, and in us, and is harmless until some imprudence enables it to get in its lethal work.

To know that a common fly can carry the poisons of typhoid, cholera, erysipelas, and different kinds of sepsis on its hairy padded foot, and implant on our food active germs of disease.

To know that certain families of mosquitoes can not only rob us of our blood, and give most pointed annoyance, but as well inject into our tissues the germs which produce malaria, or the more lethal yellow fever.

To know that a rag of clothing lying in a garret for years may be able to convey most virulent types of smallpox, scarlet fever, etc.

To know that simple cleanliness is the most valuable element in the surgeon's armamentarium, and surgical cleanliness is the synonym for the nearest attainable perfection, and as well an essential part in the wonderful success of the surgical science of to-day.

To know that there can not be too much care used in disinfection in the presence of infectious disease—that by so doing a sanitary officer is not airing a hobby—but strictly attending to business.

And so I might go on, I think enough reasons are given to substantiate the claim made for special sanitary instruction in schools. This would not be a novelty, as it is being carried out at present in several States of the U. S., as in Michigan and Indiana. Germane to this, and a practical means of carrying it out, is the idea which is elaborated in the following quotation of a resolution of the Canadian Medical Association, and correspondence connected therewith.

#### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

The following important resolution, moved by Dr. E. P. Luchapelle, and seconded by Dr. J. R. Jones, met with hearty approval:

“Whereas, public health, with all that is comprised in the term sanitary science, has acquired great prominence in all civilized countries; and whereas, enormously practical results have been secured to the community at large by the creation of health departments under governmental supervision and control; and whereas, greater authority and usefulness are given to health regulations and suggestions when they emanate from an acknowledged government department;

“Therefore, be it resolved, that in the opinion of the Canadian Medical Association now in session, the time is opportune for the Dominion Government to earnestly consider the expediency of creating a separate department of Public Health, under one of the existing Ministers, so that regulations, suggestions and correspondence, in such health matters as fall within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government,

may be issued with the authority of a department of Public Health ; and that copies of this resolution be sent by the general secretary to the Governor-General-in-Council and to the Hon. Minister of Agriculture."

Dr. Roddick and Senator Sullivan both spoke strongly in favor of the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH,

OTTAWA, September 23rd 1902.

DEAR DOCTOR,—At the meeting of the Canadian Medical Association in Montreal last week, the enclosed copy of a resolution was passed there in favor of the recognition of the importance of public health and sanitary science, by the creation of a sub-department of Public Health, to deal with such matters relating thereto as come within the jurisdiction of the Dominion Government.

If this idea commends itself to you, as I believe it does, I would suggest that a resolution on similar lines, passed by your Provincial Board, would strengthen the movement in this direction.

The extract is taken from the Montreal Daily Herald of the 18th instant.

Yours very truly,

F. MONTIZAMBERT, M. D.,

*Director-General of Public Health*

DR. A. P. REID, Esq., M. D.,

*Secretary Prov. Board of Health,*

Middleton, N. S.

80 UNION AVENUE,

MONTREAL, April 4, 1903.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—It is my intention at an early date to introduce in the House of Commons the following resolution :

"Resolved, that it is expedient in the public interest to constitute a department of public health for the Dominion, charged with the execution of the various duties which are or may be imposed upon or assumed by the government for the protection of the public health and the prevention and mitigation of disease ; and that such department of public health be administered under the direction of a minister of the crown, in conjunction with one of the existing departments of the government."

It has occurred to me that if your Provincial Board of Health favored the idea they might be willing to pass a resolution strengthening my hands.

I should consider it a personal favor if you would kindly place the matter before your Board.

Yours faithfully,

T. G. RODDICK.

DR. REID,

*Secretary Provincial Board of Health,*

Middleton, N. S.

PROVINCIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,

HALIFAX, Sept. 30th, 1902.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 27th inst., with inclosures from Dr. Montizambert.

The idea suggested by him for the creation of a sub-department of public health commends itself to me, and I have no objections to the Provincial Board of Health, through you, endorsing the idea as strongly as possible. I return enclosures.

G. H. MURRAY,

*Provincial Secretary*

DR. A. P. REID,

*Secretary Provincial Board of Health,*

Middleton, N. S.

There is another subject that calls for attention were there time, I refer to the work being done in England in reference to working up the subject of cancer and malignant disease, but at present I'll defer.

