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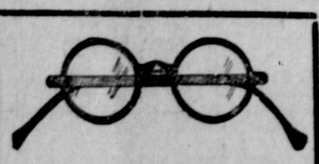

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DEATH RATE IS GROWING

(continued from page one)

year will exceed 22,000. Suicides increased 10 per cent during the year, while deaths by murder show a drop of 7 per cent.

Mr. Nollen pointed out, however, that this year's increase in mortality should not be taken as indicative of the trend covering recent years; in fact, a decided improvement in mortality has been shown over a term of years recently which was most encouraging. Notwithstanding the current increase in the mortality rate over last year, there appears a substantial decrease since 1920. The death rate among insured persons then was 958 per 100,000, but in 1926 it his dropped to 868, a gain of 90 lives per 100,000 persons insured. This shows a decrease in the mortality rate in six years of more than 9 per cent.

"As might be expected," said Mr. Nollen, "there is a fluctuation in the aggregate rate of death in a population from year to year and also in the relative magnitude of the rate of loss due to the various causes of death, so that we should observe the changes that have occurred over a period of years to measure the effect of such conditions as we know, or may assume, to have been a factor in the result. Let us take a record of the mortality experience of life insurance policyholders as tabulated for the year 1920 to 1926, inclusive. For example, in 1920, tuberculosis caused the highest number of deaths, with an average of nearly 118 to each 100,000 of exposed lives. In 1921, this rate dropped just below 100, and has continued to descend until the rate for the first ten months of the current year approximates 81 per 100,000. Compare this with the deaths due to organic diseases of the heart which ranked the next highest in 1920, with an average of 110 deaths per 100,000. Although there was a slight improvement in 1921, since then there has been a rather regular increase until the 10 months for the current year show that the rate has risen to more than 127 per 100,000, thus taking the lead among all causes

"Applying these insurance death claim figures to the estimated present population of the United States, it means that there are over 20,000 more persons dying from organic heart diseases this year than there would have been had the rate for 1920 prevailed; but there are over 30,000 fewer deaths from tuberculosis this year than the rate six years ago would have caused. Pneumonia, which shows a marked rise within the past year, following a decrease for the two preceding years, has not returned to the high rate that prevailed six years ago. The progress in the influenza rate is similar to that of pneumonia —both diseases remaining far below their loss ratio in 1920 but above the rate than prevailed in 1921 and each year since that time. Deaths due to cancer have shown a steady rise each year, and there has also been a change in tendency with recent increase in deaths due to Bright's disease, leaving the rate about the same as six years ago. Although the death rate from typhoid fever has been reduced each year, the most marked decline during the seven-year period was in the present year, reducing it to about two-thirds of that shown in 1920, an eloquent tribute to the many years of persistent human effort in life saving, which has reduced its victims to about one-ninth of the toll of this menace 26 years ago."

IMAGINARY PICTURE

In order to show just what the current mortality trends mean, Mr. Nollen drew a picture of an imaginary community of 100,000 policy-holders, and applied this year's death rates. Fatalities would be recorded as follows, he said: From organic diseases of the heart, 127; from pneumonia, 88; from tuberculosis, 81; cancer, 72; Bright's disease, 68; apoplexy, 56; influenza, 25; automobile accidents, 16; suicides and homicides, 18, and the total deaths from all causes relating principally to adult life amount to 826. Deaths resulting solely from children's diseases bring the total up to 868, an increase over the preceding year of 3.9 per cent, or about 33 more deaths in this hypothetical community of 100,000 souls.

The recent downward trends in death from certain causes such as tuberculosis, typhoid fever and contagious diseases may be credited to co-operation among various agencies working towards the lengthening of human life, pointed out Mr. Nollen. He noted, especially, the medical and surgical professions and their allied scientific workers; health bureaus, federal, state and local; wider distribution of hospital facilities; life insurance companies through payments to beneficiaries and welfare work; safety devices in industrial plants and the collection of vital statistics. He then made a plea for further co-operation of each individual citizen to bring the work of these agencies to the point of attainable perfection.

"So far," continued Mr. Nollen, "the agencies for life saving have been chiefly concerned with the control of disease as a community problem—that type of disease which manifests symptoms that are generally apparent and in which the health agencies, both medical and governmental, can take the initiative of control and regulation. The diseases which have shown an increase in ratios —and particularly those pertaining to the mature and later period of life—are of such a personal nature that they do not readily become a matter of community concern. Therefore, any movement in the direction of their cure or control must be left wholly to individual initiative; and it is this personal responsibility for the fight against fatalities from disease and accident that I seek to emphasize. The fact that diseases of the heart and other parts of the circulatory system, of the kidneys, brain and nervous system, may exist for a long period of time without any warning or specifically noticeable discomfort accounts for the progress of these diseases to a serious stage before a cure is called for by the individual.

PERIODIC EXAMINATION

"A periodic examination by a physician, dentist and oculist may disclose a defect in its early stage and give knowledge of its condition in time to effect a cure or defer the development of the disease to a fatal stage. Such periodic examination should be generally encouraged. Herein lies the only hope of improvement in the average ratio of premature deaths due to degenerative diseases. Every family should view the physician not at as a last resort for cure, but as medical counsellor whose function is to make periodic surveys and aid in maintaining a state of health. This will include the regulation of diet, as well as personal hygiene, and even a proper prescription for the use of leisure and wholesome recreation.

"Every movement for progress has depended upon a long campaign of education, and there is no exception in the cultivation of a sense of individual responsibility in matters of health and obligation to society. Such a campaign of education has already been engaged in by some of the members of this association, and doubtless much could be accomplished by a larger participation of all life companies in health and safety propaganda. The extension of civic health centers throughout the country should be encouraged. The requirements of registration of vital statistics should be made universal, and there should be an extension of registration of morbidity, as well as of deaths and births. That will also require further enlightenment of the public, to which the members of this association can largely contribute."

Referring to the growing appreciation among the people of the value of pure air, sterilized water, wholesome food, sanitary surroundings, well-directed recreation and consideration for the life of others in every activity, in the promotion of the prosperity of the community, Mr. Nollen continued: "It would be alarming if the human race were handicapped by lessened powers of resistence to the strains of our socially increasing demands for activity. Rather let us have faith that there is an ample potential reserve of human vitality, and seek a method of improvement of conditions promoting health and vigor."

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Waterfront Whiffs

(continued from page two)

away. That was once Lew talked too loud.

Minor work in the way of gas tank installation is being done on the halibut schooners Kaien, Pair of Jacks and Ternen.

C. N. R. motorship Lilehorn, Capt. Dan McKinnon, is in port with 500 tons of coal for Albert & McCaffery. The vessel will load wheat screenings for a return cargo which will be delivered to Seattle.

If one wondered what wail the commotion and loud talking on the waterfront on Thursday afternoon meant, it might be expalined that Alex Saint and Bob Thomas were doing their stuff in handling the lines of the incoming grain ship Ypres Maru, and it sounded anything but saintly.

SCHOONER HELEN SOLD

Sale of the halibut schooner Helen by Chris Hovmuller to Pete Anderson, formerly of the Cayeon, and John and Otto Moen was reported this week. The Helen, which was one of the high boats in this year's fishing, is practically new, having been built last winter at the McLean ways. The vessel is 36 feet long, has a Danish deisel engine and carries a crew of three.

Capt. Jim Field returned this week on his Northern Exchange from a cruise to the Queen Charlotte Islands as far as Capt. St. James and west. Jim was prospecting for a cannery site which he found. Now, all he wants is the financial backing and one of the snappiest little canneries west or east of Prince Rupert will be the result.

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