

Syphilis and Gonorrhoea -- Next Great Plagues to Go!

SYPHILIS, GONORRHEA STALK THROUGHOUT NATION AT WAR

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From an address to the Health Conference held on Nov. 25, 1943, under the auspices of the Health League of Canada.

Problem of venereal disease is a major Canadian national problem. From Atlantic to Pacific, the dark mesh of syphilis and gonorrhoea is spread all over our communities. We know it. The nature of venereal disease is such that people do not know about it. But we want to know about it. There is a great deal of it, and the incidence of venereal disease in Canada today is such that very few of us do not rub our eyes very closely with this disease and with the people who are suffering from venereal disease.

As far as Canada is concerned, consists of two diseases—syphilis and gonorrhoea. They are exceedingly common conservatively, we have estimated that there are today, at present, 200,000 people, at least in Canada, with syphilis. They look well and feel well, but they have syphilis and they don't know it.

Of these 200,000 people that have syphilis at this moment in time, and don't know it, 30,000 are going to die of syphilis in their brains, and of syphilis in their hearts. They will be suddenly taken from their homes in middle life, many of whom will be winners, because most of them will be men, and the Government will pay the widows' allowances and look after their children. It is a very serious national problem.

Can people tell if they have syphilis? There is only one way—thorough medical examination and

blood tests.

"Gonorrhoea is an entirely different disease. It is like a fire. It burns up brightly, acutely. The individual who has it knows he has it. He has discomfort. In the flames of the inflammation are destroyed delicate tissues that have to do with procreation and many young men and young women are robbed of the ability of ever having children because of gonorrhoea infection. Gonorrhoea, the great sterilizer of our country.

"Can syphilis and gonorrhoea be cured? "Absolutely, if we find it early, if we treat it regularly. Delay in finding the infection, irregular treatment, robs many of the chances of living long happy lives.

"The great tragedy of this problem is that venereal disease is almost completely preventable. We just have to look at the Scandinavian countries to see how they reduced syphilis to a disease of rare status.

"Every doctor everywhere in Canada has a duty to report in fections in strictest confidence to the health departments, in order that, first, the magnitude of the problem may be determined and the trend. And most important, information should be sent concerning those who have been exposed to the infection, who should be examined in case they are neglecting the required medical care.

"If indications in the United States give any glimpse of what we may anticipate in industry in Canada, the trend of the last five years is exceedingly significant. Five years ago in the United States only 17 per cent of State Health Departments were interested in Industrial Hygiene. Last year, 75 per cent had Departments of Industrial Hygiene. There has never gone forward recently any industrial hygiene program that hasn't featured venereal disease."

PEOPLE MUST ASSIST IN V. D. CONTROL

TORONTO, March 31—Emphasizing that venereal disease is not merely a local problem, but a national one, the Health League of Canada has distributed widely throughout Canada a pamphlet entitled "The Social Hygiene Voice"—a call to citizens to play their part in the control of venereal disease.

The "Voice" says that V.D., in fact, is an international problem. "Your home, your community, may be free of syphilis; yet a 'carrier' may bring it from afar—into your town, to your very doorstep," the pamphlet declares.

This serves to emphasize the general contention of the Health League that health is not a provincial problem only, but that national thinking is needed where disease is concerned.

The pamphlet is designed to draw attention of all Canadians to the fact that despite all the efforts put into nationwide anti-V.D. campaigns during the past year, venereal diseases are as serious a problem today as ever. And, this situation is aggravated by the added threat of a post-war epidemic of these diseases.

The pamphlet calls on all citizens to do their part and to help others do theirs, to control and, especially, prevent the contracting and spreading of V.D.

Noting that prevention is always better than the cure, the "Voice" states that nowhere else does this dictum apply more than in the case of venereal diseases—and advises "don't allow yourself to become exposed to it."

After describing numerous ways in which individual citizens and various organizations can help to publicize the facts concerning venereal diseases, the leaflet appeals to all to support the official "Four Sector Front Against V. D."—Health, Welfare, Legal, and Moral.

These are the salient features of the six-point plan of strategy that the Health Department has adopted:

1. Wholesome, dignified health education concerning syphilis and gonorrhoea.
2. Adequate diagnostic and treatment facilities for all persons suffering from venereal disease.
3. The suppression of quackery and charlatanism in the treatment of venereal disease.
4. Early adequate prenatal care including blood tests for expectant mothers to prevent the tragic infection of babies, including blood tests for syphilis.
5. General health examination, including blood tests for syphilis before marriage.
6. Effective measures to deal with persons and community conditions associated with the deliberate spreading of venereal disease.

The basis of the six-point strategy of the health department rests upon the axioms that syphilis and gonorrhoea, in common with other communicable diseases, are vul-



"Front Against V.D."

DISCOVERY, TREATMENT IMPORTANT

A point in the health sector of the "Front against Venereal Disease" involves effective measures directed toward seeking out and treating those persons who are unwittingly spreading infection, and closely related to and equally important measures to deal with the facilitators directly and indirectly associated with unsavory community conditions which make it easy for highly diseased persons to spread their infection. Reference is made particularly to houses of prostitution and other less obvious places of facilitation. This problem is best outlined in the words of Dr. W. Clarke, executive director of the American Social Hygiene Association, in urging that people be educated to the problems created by prostitution: "They must feel sure that prostitution cannot be made safe and sanitary; that it spreads disease; that it corrupts the morals of young people; breaks up families; demoralizes public officials; provides a haven for petty criminals; and is constantly associated with inebriety and drug addiction. In short, if citizens are sure that there is nothing good about prostitution and that it is entirely undesirable, they will favor its suppression, both during and after the war."

Poverty, poor housing, crowding, careless living, are excellent breeding spots for tuberculosis. The disease spreads easily from person to person, where there is crowding and poor sanitation. Hunger, worry, overwork, make it easier for the disease to develop once it has attacked.

Prince Rupert and area has the largest TB rate and mortality rate for tuberculosis in the province. This is believed to be attributed in large measure to the open infectious cases not under supervision.

ELDERLY MEN'S HOME (Continued from Page 3)

stage points where the glorious Prince Rupert sunsets may be witnessed in all their colorful splendor. In short, no happier selection of site could have been made.

The Home, measuring 87 by 49 feet, and of a storey-and-a-half size, will have comfortable accommodation for 16 persons, in three dormitories—one with capacity for six, and two holding four, in addition to a two-bed sick bay. There will also be dining room and kitchen, as well as living quarters for the attendant and storage space.

Bids for the Home are returnable April 20.

Townley and Matheson of Vancouver are the architects.

V.D. NEED NOT EXIST IN CANADA

Can venereal disease be more than controlled? Can it be wiped out? Yes, other countries have done it by taking strong measures and by proper, dignified adult and youth education. Sweden has brought syphilis and gonorrhoea almost to the vanishing point within her borders. Russia has wiped it out almost completely. Yes, Canada can wipe it out. But it needs the help of you and your family.

A branch venereal disease clinic of the Provincial Board of Health, Division of Venereal Disease Control is maintained at the Prince Rupert Health Unit. A total of 194 persons were admitted to the clinic for observation, 72 were discharged non-venereal; 36 were admitted to the syphilis clinic, and 86 were admitted to the gonorrhoea clinic. A total of 1,071 syphilis and 117 gonorrhoea treatments were given.

Tuberculosis—what to do about it. Stay away from known spreaders of TB germs. This is the best way to avoid infection. Beware of people who cough and spit. Live a well regulated life. Eat properly, get enough rest, avoid excesses. This helps to build and maintain resistance.

Only a physician is qualified to diagnose or treat a venereal infection. The "Quack" who tries to diagnose, treat or cure syphilis or gonorrhoea does so illegally and with complete disregard for the welfare of his "patient".

Aids to health—adequate sleep and rest, outdoor exercise each day, mental relaxation, regular elimination, and periodic check-ups by your physician and dentist.

UNABATED BATTLE WAGED AGAINST V. D. BY SERIES OF CAMPAIGNS

The battle against the spread of venereal disease goes on unabated by those who know its dread results. Campaign after campaign is launched to attack the disease. Public assistance has been sought. But it is an uphill fight.

Let's take a look at the figures for Prince Rupert—the town you live in—for example:

In 1944, syphilis and gonorrhoea topped the civilian list of reported communicable diseases. There were approximately one-fifth more venereal diseases reported than all other communicable diseases combined, including tuberculosis. Private physicians treated 57 cases of gonorrhoea and the Health Unit V.D. clinic took care of 86. Of this 143, 60 per cent were persons of the white race.

DEPARTMENTS SEEK TO END RAT MENACE

As far back as civilization can be traced, the human being has always been molested with the rodent pest. Governments throughout the world are constantly studying, through their scientific research and health departments, means to exterminate the Real Public Enemy. It is estimated that there are two rats for every human being in this country. In order to live, each rat must consume at least \$2.00 worth of food material a year, and yet this estimate does not take into consideration the more important fact that the rat, being destructive by nature, will cause many times more damage to merchandise than the value of food he consumes.

But, more vital than the monetary loss, is the fact that science has traced and definitely proven that some of our worst plagues and diseases have either originated with, or are being carried by, or transmitted through, the rat. Being carriers or transmitters of disease, they contaminate food and water supplies.

To cope with the situation in Prince Rupert, your local health department has drawn up plans for an extensive educational campaign on rat control and extermination. Special approved rat poison has been purchased and suitably packaged for individual public use. Printed leaflets on the use of poisons, trapping and rat-proofing of buildings, are being prepared to commence the campaign soon.

The department appeals for co-operation of all concerned in reducing the rat population, by proper disposal of refuse and rat-proofing buildings, thus destroying harborages and feeding places.

What's it to you? You're not immune and you pay taxes, too. The cost of V.D. control is paid by you, and so is the cost in damaged property, spoiled goods, indirect death. And that cost runs into millions every year in this country.

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