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A NATION'S HEALTH — IS — A NATION'S WEALTH

THE FIVE YEARS FIGHT

FOR the last five years there has been waged a steady, persistent, untiring campaign for the betterment of health conditions in this city.

Five years ago, it was inaugurated at a great public meeting in the Mount Royal Hotel when the Anti-Tuberculosis and General Health League was formed under the chairmanship of Sir Arthur Currie, with Dr. Grant Fleming as manager.

The conditions this new League faced were most discouraging. The civic and provincial authorities were lethargic — or worse. The public were apathetic and hopeless. Preventable diseases were disabling and killing our population. We were neither fighting them by modern methods nor so much as studying local health conditions in any systematic fashion.

Many were curious to see how the League could work—how it could overcome indifference—how it could awaken official activity—how it could be financed—what would be the practical results.

Yesterday in the Mount Royal Hotel the Board of Directors of this League made a final report on their five years' campaign. It is a most interesting document and appears in full elsewhere in this paper. It answers all these questions. It constitutes a record of resolute effort, of resourceful tactics and of conspicuous achievement which would not have been deemed possible in the discouraging spring of 1925.

The proclaimed purpose of the League has always been—not to take on its own shoulders the proper responsibilities of our various official authorities—but to so arouse and increase public interest in the subject that the authorities would be compelled to do their duty. That has been its line of campaign. It fought for the pasteurization of our civic milk supply until the civic authorities were compelled to yield to public clamour and save the babies from poisoned milk. It inaugurated a Health Survey of the city which enabled the authorities—and the citizens—to know definitely just how appalling local conditions were. Up to that time, all our knowledge on the subject had been haphazard and fragmentary.

It campaigned unceasingly for a well-equipped Health Department at the City Hall. It was badly needed — as the tragic Typhoid Epidemic so cruelly proved. The result is that the civic health budget has been increased by 60 per cent of the augmented appropriation recommended by the Survey Report, the staff has been improved, a civic bacteriologist has been put in charge of the city laboratory, and an independent Board of Health has been appointed which will keep constant watch on the health of the city.

It went in for educational work extensively. The press was used; lessons were given at public demonstrations, in summer camps and at French and English health centres. Immunization centres against diphtheria were established with excellent results. Tuberculosis was fought with a staff of nurses and public opinion stirred to demand real action by the Provincial Government. Always the plan was to drive governments, civic, provincial and federal, to do their duty.

This Anti-Tuberculosis and General Health League now announce that they are laying down their commission. After five arduous years of active campaigning, they are of the opinion that the work can be carried on by the Montreal Health Survey Committee, a body which was appointed by the League and has already won public confidence. It would keep

the policies of the League alive and public interest awake. It should, in a few years, conduct another Health Survey of the city to see whether we have progressed or fallen behind.

The Star is authorized to announce that the Survey Committee will undertake this task and carry on. It will be just as hard a task as the League has been pressing with so much vigour. Eternal vigilance is the price of more than liberty—it is the price of public and private health. But the winning of final victory must rest with the public. The best leadership falls unless the citizens rally to its support. We ought to make Montreal, with its abundance of water, its vigorous climate, its remarkable freedom from surrounding cities that might foul the air, one of the healthiest communities in the world.

But we can only do it by seeing that the water is pure, the milk is unpoisoned, the food is clean, contagious disease is isolated, tuberculous patients are immersed in our surrounding abundance of fresh air, housing is sanitary, streets are freed from filth and our people are taught to live sane and healthy lives.