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THE DOUBLE ALLEGIANCE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF
HEALTH.*

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Asked by our President, and asked as a Member of that University, which five years ago was the first on this continent to establish a post-graduate course and diploma in public health, to open a discussion upon the importance of the Diploma of Public Health in the development of the Public Health Service, I feel myself placed in a peculiarly delicate position.

In the President's communication I gathered—and therein I imagine I was mistaken—that conditions in the United States were especially under discussion, and my remarks are especially directed thereto. Fortunately most of what I have to say may be applied equally to Canada and Mexico. Notwithstanding my mistake I am largely impenitent, for the main bulk of my audience is surely of citizens of the United States, and inevitably you as a body are most interested in the consideration of conditions bearing upon the development of the Public Health Service in this country.

If he cannot indulge in whole-hearted appreciation but must probe into open sores, your alien critic is altogether uncomfortable, not to say boorish. It is quite right and proper that those of the family should discuss family failings freely between themselves, but when the neighbour from over the fence calls attention to them it is quite another matter, and he deserves to have things thrown at him.

Now unfortunately you across the line have been discussing this matter of the failings of your public health service quite loudly, and not least loudly at the meetings of this association; and, as I say, asked to take part in the conversation, I find myself in difficulties.

Let me therefore in propitiation say at the start that we in Canada,

* An address delivered as one of the papers opening a discussion upon "The Education of Medical Officers of Health" at the Meeting of the American Public Health Association, Boston, September 25th, 1905.