

THE WORLD

IN 1917, Mr. John F. Sweeting, Industrial Agent, Canadian Pacific Ry., Calgary, transmitted to the Commission of Conservation a memorandum by Dr. T. G. Lethbridge, Cochrane, Alta. Dr. Ritchie claimed that goitre was alarmingly prevalent in Alberta. He said that in August, 1916, he stood on 8th Avenue, Calgary, "with a gentleman for three quarters of an hour during the lunch time checking off the distinguishable cases passing, and we estimated that at least 50 per cent of the women we saw, whose necks were exposed, showed distinct goitres, and these were mostly working girls and the prospective mother of the next generation."

Dr. Ritchie also stated that a Calgary physician had informed him "that about 15 per cent of the students attending the Calgary Normal Schools are victims of goitre, although most of them have only been a short time resident of the province. . . . It is our duty to prohibit the ingress of settlers into the west until at least we initiate active measures with a view toward controlling the disease."

This correspondence was submitted to Dr. F. F. Norman, Provincial Medical Officer of Health for Alberta, *pro tem*, with a request that he would favour the Commission with his views.

Dr. Norman, in his reply, said: "I cannot consider this a particularly virulent disease, as virulence in my mind is connected with fatality, while in 1915-1916, no cases died from ordinary goitre. In 1915, eight cases died of exophthalmic goitre and, in 1916, nine died of the same disease. I believe most physicians consider this quite separate and distinct from the ordinary goitre about which Dr. Ritchie is writing, so that, for that variety, there have been no deaths."

"When one compares this with the fatality from tuberculosis of 265 in 1915 and 297 in 1916, and, again, 312 deaths in 1915 from pneumonia (bronchial and lobar) and 211 in 1916, and, with these two diseases proving fatal at this rate, more certainly they are the diseases that should be first taken up and combated, for goitre, at the most, is only a disfiguring disease. Also, it is a world wide trouble, and, in certain districts, it is probably more prevalent than in others; but we get the benefit of all investigations the world over without the expenditure of money, inasmuch as the cause is the same in all places."

"At one time, I believe, the water was blamed, then, I think, there was a revulsion of sentiment against that; but, as to the actual statistics of to-day, I am not so conversant. However, I think these diseases should be more judged by fatality than any other way. Also, the other provinces in Canada have just as much goitre and perhaps more than Alberta as a whole, but this district of Cochrane may be particularly troubled with this disease, and, if investigated at all, it should be a Dominion-wide investigation, not only for Alberta but for all the provinces."

"A great deal of money has been spent on investigation in Europe, especially in Switzerland and England, and in the United States, and