

infection. He did not at that time advance the view that it was a communicable infection. We now know that it is, though the organism has not yet been isolated. It is a disease of the hot months. It is always present, at some place or other, in the sporadic form. At intervals of varying duration it becomes epidemic.

Within the past two months the lay press has devoted a good deal of space and attention to the epidemic that began in New York and spread to many other points in the United States. When the lay press takes a hand in the discussion of a medical question there is certain to be a good deal of exaggeration and misrepresentation of the real conditions. This is not intentional, but unavoidable.

An ordinary epidemic of whooping cough, measles, diphtheria or scarlet fever will cause much more sickness and occasion more deaths than an epidemic of antero-poliomyelitis; but these others are comparably common, and the public have come to regard them as, like the poor, something we must always have with us. The constant stream of funerals resulting from tuberculosis attract almost no attention, and yet about 12,000 die of this disease in Canada every year.

But antero-poliomyelitis is, nevertheless, a serious disease. The mortality in the early part of an epidemic is always high, and the fate of those who do not die, is almost always a sad one. It is, therefore, incumbent upon all to do their utmost to arrest the spread of the disease. There can be little doubt but that it is spread in some way from the sick to the well. But very careful study does not show that it often attacks more than one in a family. To this, however, there are rare exceptions, and two or three in a family have suffered. There is much yet to learn as to its mode of spread, and no sure rules can be laid down until the germ has been discovered, and its life history studied.

But there are a few things that can and should be done. In the first place, the physician should be on the alert for the detection of the disease, and to insist on immediate separation of the sick from the well. There should be a rigid quarantine of the premises for sufficient time as to arrest the spread of infection. The public should be willing to co-operate with the profession in these efforts. Finally, the authorities should aid in every way; and, where necessary, give financial aid to make the quarantine effective, but not oppressive.

"An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure" says the old adage. Let everyone be wise and rise to the occasion. There is need for a well thought out plan of action. We congratulate the Ontario Board of Health on the helpful circular is published.