

RETURN OF INFANTILE PARALYSIS; A PROBLEM FOR THIS SUMMER

The Disease Expected to Reappear—Probability of Incidence in the Far West—Previous Experience in Poliomyelitis Epidemic.

By Jonathan A. Rawson, Jr.

Is infantile paralysis, poliomyelitis, or "polio" as it is commonly called for short, coming again to the United States this summer? If it is coming, what do we know about it from last summer's experience, and what are we going to do to get ready for it as individuals and as communities? These questions will be considered in this article and in two that will follow.

Undoubtedly it will return. The questions are to what extent and where? Not over the physician who are most familiar with the disease will venture to prophesy for the country as a whole, or even for their own cities and States. Not since 1907 has the country been entirely free from the disease. Every summer has seen an increase in the number of cases.

Last year there were in the United States more than 27,000 cases, the great majority in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. Opinions differ widely in these States as to what is to be expected this year. New York State health officials are expecting an outbreak so extensive as that of 1916. Connecticut, where the disease found victims last year in 116 of the 168 towns, looks for no epidemic, but members of that State since 1910, and has no hope that the State will escape this summer.

The Massachusetts authorities "have no idea whatever about the disease, will return during the coming summer."

Dr. J. C. Price, director of the New Jersey Department of Health, says that so little is known about the disease of the disease to take an epidemic form that it is impossible to say what may be expected this year.

there was no wholesale endeavor to control all the people of the city or all its visitors. At the close of the season the first city had six cases and the last city had eight.

At the height of last summer's epidemic scores of towns and cities were quarantining themselves against New York city. New York was, in fact, in a state of siege so far as getting its children away from home was concerned. Dr. Haven Emerson, New York city's Commissioner of Health, beyond a doubt, had more personal experience with the quarantine mania last summer than any other health official in the country. This is what he says of quarantines:

"As a means of impressing upon the public the seriousness of the epidemic and the need of caution, various measures may be justified, among them the ban upon public assemblages of children within confined spaces, except where medical or nursing supervision and identification of homes or addresses of children could be maintained.

"Identification of travellers, especially of children, and their supervision at their place of arrival for the presumed incubation period of the disease, is another reasonable means of controlling obvious transmission of the disease; but the incompleteness of this under modern conditions of traffic, and in view of the probability of the presence of large numbers of healthy carriers, children and adults, makes its advisability very questionable.

"The alternative, one may say, is the

absolute quarantine against people coming from places where the disease is prevalent. I hardly need to recall the countless instances of inconvenience, hardship, yes, real brutal inhumanity, which resulted from the application of the general quarantine of counties, towns, and States, against each other during the past summer. I do not know of any health officer who can or has maintained that such measures have had the slightest effect upon the incidence or spread of the disease in his jurisdiction, and I know that nothing has developed so many automobile detours, such ingenuity in the violation of the laws, and such wholehearted disrespect for reasonable sanitary law and its enforcement as the "General reporting of travellers under the age of sixteen by the health officer at the point of departure to the health officer at the place of destination would probably accomplish all that can be expected. Modern methods of sanitary control are directed towards localizing the disease in the person of the sick individual. Interference with the travelling of healthy people cannot be legally justified, nor will it be cordially supported by the public until health officers can make good their ability to detect and prove the presence of the virus in any one other than those actually suffering or recently recovered from the disease in a way that will not materially hinder personal freedom.

In the article which follows, account will be taken of the conclusion reached by the medical men, as a result of last year's epidemic, which point the way for this year's procedure. In essence, the answer to the question, "Will it come again?" seems to be, "It will, but nobody knows where; almost anywhere between the Atlantic and the Pacific, and probably in the greatest measure in places where it was not prevalent last year."

Last year's experience furnishes a perplexing admixture of apprehension and reassurance for the citizen, but from all the uncertainty and doubt there stands out a certain modicum of guidance for the approaching summer, invaluable alike to the citizen, and their official leaders in the way of preventing disease, the health authorities.

U. S. HOUSE PASSES BIG WAR BUDGET

Seven Billion Dollars Authorized—Three Billion Will be Loaned to Allies.

Washington, April 15.—Without a dissenting voice the house, amid plaudits of members and the galleries, late last night passed the seven-billion dollar war revenue authorization measure. One member, Representative London, of New York, the only Socialist in congress, voted "present."

Owing to general pairs and absences only 389 votes were recorded for the bill, but both Democratic Leader Ritchie and Republican Leader Mann announced that all of their members would have voted affirmatively if they had been present.

The bill authorizes five billion dollars in bonds of which \$3,000,000,000 will be loaned to Entente countries, and the issuance of treasury certificates for two billion dollars ultimately to be met by increased taxation. Passage of the measure was never in doubt during the two days it was under consideration in the house, and favorable action by an overwhelming vote is assured in the senate, where it will be taken up Monday. It probably will be signed by the president by the middle of the week.

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