

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, APRIL 14, 1919

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## A NOTABLE REPORT.

A great deal of interest naturally attaches to the first annual report of the chief medical officer of the province to the minister of health. It establishes a starting point. It relates to the year ending Oct. 31, 1918, but some of the reports sent in from the counties were written in December, and the references to the epidemic of influenza cover the month of November as well as October.

As the department had not been organized under the public health act of 1918, and the act itself was only proclaimed in October, the report of the chief medical officer, Dr. G. G. Melvin, deals almost altogether with conditions as they existed under the old act. Hence, as already remarked, this report establishes a starting point. With properly constituted boards of health under the new act, as provided this year, the next report will show a marked contrast.

Perhaps the best evidence of the need of a change is found in the brief report of the chairman of one of the county boards of health. He said he had made no report for two years because there had been no active board of health, and that the resident doctors never reported any cases of contagious or infectious diseases. Under the new act it will be impossible for such conditions to exist anywhere in the province.

The Times-Star a few days ago presented a summary of the striking report of Dr. Melvin, medical inspector of St. John schools, which appears in the report now under review, and which makes clear not only the need but the value of such inspection of all schools.

Dr. Melvin points out the difficulty encountered in fighting influenza and smallpox last year because the new department had not yet been organized; but he also shows that in its still unorganized state it did splendid work, receiving very hearty support from the former local boards to the extent of their ability, which was limited by lack of organization and equipment. He also points out that such epidemics as those of last year make it clear that better organization is greatly needed.

Referring to the epidemic of influenza, Dr. Melvin characterizes it as the worst that has visited the western hemisphere in historic times, and perhaps the eastern hemisphere since the bubonic plague. An incomplete summary for October and November shows 26,686 cases in New Brunswick, with 1046 deaths. This is a painful record, and yet the province probably suffered less than most other communities of equal population. Because of lack of proper organization, it was impossible to get accurate reports from all districts, and none at all from some. Dr. Melvin pays a warm tribute to the military authorities for the help they gave in detaching medical officers to aid in fighting the epidemic. The incomplete summary of influenza cases in October and November, as far as it could be gathered, was as follows:—

Cases.	Deaths.
Town of Marysville. 180	11
City of Fredericton. 715	19
City of Moncton. 1,200	45
City of Moncton. 3,428	29
Northumberland Co. 5,515	81
Kent county. 607	121
Gloucester county. 2,000	27
Campbellton. 8	20
Madawaska county. 4,338	218
T'n of Edmundston. 2,000	18
Carleton county. 1,217	45
Victoria county. 2,400	194
Charlotte county. 1,246	22
St. John C'y and Co. 1,334	51
26,686	1,046

We learn with interest from this report that there were 8,794 cases of smallpox in the province last year. Dr. Melvin well describes it as a startling record. By counties it is as follows:—

Madawaska, 200; Victoria, 200; Restigouche, 220; St. Stephen, 1; Gloucester, 1,900; St. George, 25; Westmorland, 200; Sarnaby, 1; Grand Manan, 6; Northumberland, 251; Kent, 435; Queens, 80; Carleton, 40; Edmundston, 7; Fredericton, 1; Moncton, 87; St. John, 40.
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Dr. Melvin is inclined to believe that the total of 8,794 is really an underestimate, as many mild cases may not have been reported. Since smallpox is a contagious disease the facts show again the need of a properly organized and active health department.

The report of the Fredericton board of health shows a death-rate of 28.38 per thousand, compared with 19.72 in 1915-16, and an infant mortality rate of 111 per thousand births. In St. John the death rate per thousand was 17.31, compared with 16.16 in 1915-16; and the infant mortality 118.18 per thousand births. In Moncton the death rate was 18.49—a decided increase. In the three cities the influenza of course accounted for an increase in the general death rate last year. Fredericton had thirteen deaths from tuberculosis, St. John eighty-nine and Moncton fifteen. In St. John during the year there were twenty-three deaths from violence.

The medical health officer dwells upon the great value of general sanitation, which receives far too little attention. He commends the Fredericton board for its care of the milk supply and the St. John board for destroying unwholesome food products, closing houses unfit for habitation, and for the medical inspection of schools.

The first report of Dr. Abramson, director of the bureau of laboratories, appears in this book, and makes clear the great value of the work to physicians all over the province.

The reports from the various health districts give very interesting and valuable information. Take, for example, the report from Edmundston. The town was divided into three districts for sanitary purposes. There was a house to house visitation and one house was closed. The schools were twice inspected. Some cases of smallpox were quarantined and six hundred people vaccinated. The town has about completed a sewer system. Dr. Simard sounds this cheerful note:—

"I hope that with the co-operation of the council and the influential citizens of my district, Edmundston will be one of the most progressive towns, not only in financial matters, but also in philanthropy and hygienic work."

Contrast this with the following sentences from the report from another town much nearer St. John:—"Our sewerage system is very poor. The water supply is not very good. The total amount assessed for health purposes was only \$25."

An appendix to Dr. Melvin's report gives the composition of the various sub-district boards under the new act. They will doubtless all be in good working order this year, and in a far better position to deal with any epidemic and to promote the general health of their communities.

Hon. Dr. Roberts, minister of health, has every reason to regard with satisfaction the results achieved and the prospect that opens up under the act the province owes to his faith, persistency and initiative.

## A PROVINCIAL ISSUE

It may be hoped that no member of the legislature will lose sight of the larger significance of the dispute between St. John and the New Brunswick Power Company.

This is far more than a local matter. If a company with not more than \$1,850,000 invested can get a rate base of \$2,800,000, without putting an additional dollar into the enterprise; and get recognition for \$3,000,000 in securities when the former company had only \$2,057,000 outstanding against the same plant; then it will only be necessary hereafter for any public utility corporation in the province to issue more stock without investing any more money and make the people pay interest and dividends thereon; and whoever buys the watered stock would feel assured that the legislature will see that it yields a good profit at the expense of the people.

The people of St. John are willing to pay a fair return on a legitimate investment, but to ask them to do more is to oppress them, and to lend encouragement to promoters and exploiters who have no regard for the public except as a source of sudden wealth. In protecting St. John people the legislature is not serving notice that New Brunswick is not a good field for stock watering schemes, and in that way will be putting a wall of protection around every city, town and municipality. Far more than the interests of St. John are involved in this affair. As between the interests of the public and those who issue and those who with their eyes open purchase watered stock, it should not be difficult to choose. The house should adopt the city's amendments to the Carrier bill. The threat that American capital will be withheld from investment here unless the stock-jobbers have their way will not frighten any of the members. They know there is always a market for good securities and it would be surprising, to say the least, if they accepted forced dictation in regard to their own affairs.

The Standard's horse-laugh resounds once more at expense of Premier Foster. The latter has introduced a water-power bill. It has provisions that protect investors, protect the public, and make it possible to develop the water powers of the province. Of course that is ridiculous. What is there in it for the jolly gaffers? Nothing. Hence the scornful bray of the Standard.

If members of the legislature will take the trouble to look into it they will find that some sections of the Children's Protection Bill concerning which they were in doubt are exactly the same as are in effect in Ontario and other provinces, and approved by the test of actual use for years past.

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which you BUY, MILL TO HOME. Barrel, \$12.50; Half Barrel, \$6.50; Half Barrel Bag, \$5.50; 24 lb. bag, \$1.50.  
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**FOWLER MILLING CO., Ltd.**  
West St. John

## OAK HALL MAKES INTERESTING CHANGE IN STORE ARRANGEMENT

In 1916, when Scovill Brothers, Ltd., erected their fine new building on King street, they thought ample provisions had been made for many years to come; the past three years have proven their estimates to be far wide of the trend of actual events.

A year ago it was found necessary to make extensive alterations to the first and second floors, moving the offices to the top floor to make room for the rapid growth of the men's clothing department, and re-arranging the men's furnishing department to handle the increased business of this department with quick dispatch.

This season it has been found that both the boys' and women's department occupying the third floor, have outgrown the space allotted to them—more space was a necessity—and to obtain this it became necessary to move the general stock rooms from the fourth floor to the basement, turning this fourth floor into an exclusive "boys' shop," and utilizing the entire third floor for the women's section.

This change fills a long felt need to the shoppers of this vicinity, giving them, as it does, an exclusive boys' shop, the only one in the city. It has long been realized that the boys of this community have had as much right to an exclusive shop of their own as their elders, and now this has materialized.

The women's department will occupy the entire third floor, thus permitting of much better display opportunities and more freedom than has hitherto been the case.

For the last three weeks, carpenters, masons, painters and electricians have been busy making these changes; they are now completed; new fixtures have been brought in; and Miss Daley has just returned from New York with many new interesting garments of the latest modes to freshen up the women's section.

All this has been done, and Oak Hall is now ready with these two new departments to welcome the people of St. John.

An unusually fine programme was rendered in Centenary church on Saturday afternoon when an organ recital was given by Miss A. G. Hea. Mrs. A. P.

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Note: Doctors say Bon-Opto strengthens eyesight 25% in a week's time in many instances. Watson Drug Store and others.

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Harrison, N. Y.—"When my first child was born I did not know about the Vegetable Compound and had a very hard time. I read in the newspaper about the Vegetable Compound and when my second child came I took it and was well during the whole time, and childbirth was a breeze. Ever since then I have used it for any weakness and would not be without it for the world. I do all my work and am strong and healthy. I am nursing my baby, and I still take the Vegetable Compound as it keeps a woman in good health. You may publish my testimonial for the good of other women, if you choose to do so."—Mrs. C. WESTMORELAND, Harrison, N. Y.

Women who suffer from displacements, irregularities, inflammation, ulceration, backache, headaches and nervousness should lose no time in giving this famous root and herb remedy, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, a trial, and for special advice write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Mass.