

To the Chairman and Directors:-

When the Montreal Anti-Tuberculosis and General Health League was formed, it was understood that a general survey and study of health conditions, as they exist in Montreal, should be made. As the programme developed, it was accepted that survey and study should go hand in hand with actual health work, in so far as financial and other resources would permit. Previous reports, particularly the second annual report, have made clear just what we are doing, also, the objective in mind and the results obtained, in so far as one can speak of results after so short a period of activity.

I would take this opportunity to re-state what was said at the time of my appointment, namely, that results in health work follow the efforts of years, not months and that a five-year programme is the minimum required to demonstrate the need and value of health work, many more years being, of course, necessary to complete the application and secure the permanent value of health work, the need, value and necessary organization for which have been pointed out and possibly demonstrated in the five-year period.

This report is made in order to place before the League Directors, in writing, the opinion formed by the managing director concerning health conditions in Montreal as at the present time.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

In the final analysis, the prevention of disease and the maintenance of health constitute a personal, or at least a family responsibility. Practically, however, in our community life, we do not live in an isolated way and, therefore, certain phases of disease prevention and health promotion must be considered from a community standpoint. In addition to this, disease is a community liability and health a community asset, therefore, the maintenance of health is a responsibility of the state. Also, growing out of our modern systems of living, people have decided to secure certain things as a group, and so have organized certain community services for which they pay; some health work passes to community effort under this heading.

MONTREAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

We have in Montreal a Department of Health. It was customary, for many years, to blame and criticize this department for the unsatisfactory health record of this city. No one questions that a general death rate of 14.2, an infant mortality rate of 122.4 and a tuberculosis death rate of 139 are positive proof of an undesirable health condition. Reading the annual reports of the Department for the past years, one cannot but be impressed with the logical and clear thinking and planning of the Director of the Department. The fact that his department was criticized made his work unnecessarily difficult, and hindered progress. At the present time, this has been changed, and we see where, in the daily press, many persons take the opportunity of expressing approval of the Director and his Department. The result will be that the municipal authorities will realize that thinking people desire to support health work, and so the Department is more likely to have its budget and authority augmented. The Department of Health must be the pivotal point of Montreal's health work - an efficient department is the key to success. It is therefore necessary that the public have confidence in the department. This does not mean that voluntary health organizations and health workers as individuals must always agree with the department. It does mean, however, that we should seek to arrive at mutually satisfactory understandings, to smooth out our disagreements in private in order that publicly we may be united, and so, that the people may not be misled by contrary opinions. If public dissent is ever deemed necessary, then it should be clear-cut, confined to the one issue, and not be a general criticism.

One division of the Department is that of Food Inspection. "The main object of the Food Inspection Division being the improvement in quality and methods of handling and preparing of all kinds of foods, so as to ensure to the consumers a clean, wholesome and adequate food supply."

Since the passing of the milk by-law and meat inspection by-law (and when the proposed regulations concerning restaurants are adopted), this Division will have, for the present, the requisite legal powers to attain their main object. Laws are, of course, only of value to the extent that they are enforced.