

Paper read before the Tuberculosis Conference, held at Ottawa, February 11th and following days, by Dr. C. J. Fagan.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

I left home on a day's notice, and did not know I was expected to address a meeting of this character till late last night; I, therefore, am not prepared to treat as I should like to, the important subject under discussion; but, I assure you that the aims and objects of the meeting have my full and entire sympathy, and as a delegate from the British Columbia Government, I think my presence is sufficient surety for their good intentions, and I have no doubt they will be only too glad to join in with the other Provinces and assist in carrying out, fully, the measures decided on at the meeting for the prevention and cure of tuberculosis.

As you all know, tuberculosis is responsible for the deaths of a greater number of people than all the other contagious and infectious diseases combined. Such theatrical diseases as small-pox, plague, etc., are so dreaded that the neglect to provide against their incursions would mean, and rightly too, the downfall of any Government.

A meeting, such as this, will educate the people; and when they understand that the dreaded consumption is as preventible as small-pox, they will demand that action be taken—not only to prevent, but also to erect sanatoria for the cure of those affected.

At this present day, I think we are all united as to the value of preventive measures in limiting and controlling the spread of contagious disease. I am quite satisfied that, if the proper preventive measures are adopted and carried out, within five years the deaths from the contagious disease under discussion will be reduced fifty per cent.

I am very glad this movement has begun, and have no doubt it will meet, as it ought to do, the hearty support of all classes, and all in authority will shoulder a weighty responsibility if they refuse aid.

I now come to the last part of the resolution under discussion, and will only touch on one of the many duties of individuals towards their neighbours in respect to tuberculosis. My appeal is to the ladies, and, although I fear their hearts are hardened where fashion blocks the way, I will state for their benefit a few facts:—

As is now admitted, the greatest cause of the spread of tuberculosis is the stirring up of infected dust. The bacillus tuberculosis follows the ordinary laws of gravity and settles down to earth, satisfied to live his life, probably, clinging to a particle of dust—but Miss Fashion comes along and, with an energy worthy of a better cause, sweeps up with her trailing skirt the peaceful bacillus to be inspired by some unfortunate.

This is happening day after day and hour after hour, and is, I am satisfied, a most fruitful source of infection. Miss Fashion does not think she is cruel, yet, by her actions, she kills thousands. She would be horrified were she told she is dirty. I have gone to dress-cleaners in Victoria (and I am sure the same is true in every city in Canada) and have been told that leaders in society have sent in skirts for cleaning and repair which the proprietor refused to send to his workshop so loaded were they with filth. I refuse to believe that Fashion will win against Humanity, and have every confidence in the kindness of the gentler sex and have no doubt they will be ready to assist us when they realise how serious a matter this is.

COPY OF RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT OTTAWA.

Resolution No. 1.

Resolved, that in the opinion of this Conference, which represents the Governments and people of every part of Canada, it is the duty of every Government, Municipality, and individual citizen, to adopt organised methods for lessening the spread of a disease which is causing, directly or indirectly, probably one-fifth of the total deaths in the Dominion.

Resolution No. 2.

Resolved, that this Conference does especially urge upon those Governments, and all Municipal Councils and Boards of Health, the enactment of such legislation as will,—

1. Encourage the notification of all cases of tuberculosis;