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ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

Report Soon to be Issued by President George E. Vincent

Who Addressed the St. John Canadian Clubs Not Long Since—The Fight Against Yellow Fever.

New York, July 6.—The review of the past year's work of the Rockefeller Foundation by its president, George E. Vincent, will be made public within a few days.

In summarizing the year's work the first installment of the review says that during 1919 the Foundation participated in activities of public health and medical education in thirty-nine different governmental areas, in each case by invitation of and in co-operation with the local governments concerned.

Regarding the campaign for the eradication of yellow fever the review says, in part:

"To eradicate yellow fever from these seed-beds (Guayaquil in Ecuador, Merida in Yucatan, suspected areas in Venezuela, along the coast of Brazil and along the west coast of Africa) is the high adventure upon which the Rockefeller Foundation embarked in 1918 under the leadership of General William C. Gorgas. The results so far have been substantial and encouraging."

The campaign for the eradication of yellow fever was based upon the discovery already made by Drs. Finlay, Reed, Lazear and others in Cuba that yellow fever is carried from one person to another by a female mosquito of the species known as Stegomyia.

Other important extracts from the review follow:

"Until recently attempts to discover

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the organism which incites yellow fever had failed. How the Stegomyia mosquito goes about her work was fully understood, but just what she injects into her victims remained a mystery.

"Guayaquil was selected as the most favorable centre for research. There cases of yellow fever were always available, and experienced physicians skilful in detecting them were at hand. The one man peculiarly fitted by natural abilities, training and experience to pursue the elusive organism was Dr. Hideyoshi Noguchi, bacteriologist of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, who had made a special study of its near relative, the germ infectious jaundice.

"With the blood of patients who were in the early stages of the disease Noguchi infected guinea pigs. These fell ill, showing symptoms which resembled those of men suffering from yellow fever. The blood of the first group of guinea pigs was used to inoculate another group in which the same 'manifestations of disease duly appeared.

"Finally Noguchi was able to cultivate from the blood a minute, delicate, threadlike, spiral organism—half-way between a microscopic animal (microbe) and a microscopic plant (bacterium). To this he gave the name Leptospira icteroides—slim spiral, the jaundice-maker."

Dr. Noguchi Prepares a Serum.

"Although Noguchi did not assert that he had discovered the inciting germ of yellow fever, and was careful to state

that he wished to test his results at Guayaquil by further investigations in other places, especially in Merida, Yucatan, there is no doubt that he has made an enormously valuable contribution to the knowledge of the disease.

"Furthermore, his discovery of the slim spiral jaundice-maker enabled him to prepare a serum. This has been administered in a number of cases with apparently favorable effect. It seems more than likely that a means of identifying yellow fever has been found, and that the chances are good of substantially reducing the mortality of the disease which now ranges between fifty and eighty-five per cent, and furthermore, that a vaccine can be made which apparently protects non-immunes against infection.

"The average number of cases of yellow fever annually reported in Guayaquil for the years 1912-1918, inclusive, was 229. In 1918 the total reached 460. It was in November, 1918, that a representative of the International Health Board of the Rockefeller Foundation arrived in Guayaquil to organize a campaign of eradication. He came upon the scene when the disease was at its height. In December eighty-eight new cases were recorded.

Local Authorities Co-operate.

"The attack was undertaken on the invitation of the authorities both of Ecuador and of Guayaquil, who left nothing undone to insure success. Officials were delegated to co-operate in the programme. Special municipal ordinances were enacted and rigidly enforced to compel compliance with the measures which were recommended.

"Only one American was sent to Guayaquil to organize the staff, which was made up of Ecuadorians, many of

whom were experienced in yellow fever work. Within a short time more than a hundred men were recruited and assigned to their tasks.

"The campaign aimed at two things:

"1.—The earliest discovery of cases of yellow fever which were to be promptly isolated and screened from mosquitoes, and

"2.—The elimination of the Stegomyia by denying the female access to water in which to deposit their eggs.

"It was the peculiar condition of the public water supply, which presented the chief problem. The hydrants of Guayaquil flow only an hour and a half in twenty-four. The well-to-do have tanks on the upper floors of their houses; the less fortunate store water in barrels, cans, and other containers.

"These conditions were ideal for the breeding of the Stegomyia. It was not difficult to screen the tanks, or to protect barrels with wooden covers.

Minnows Mobilized for the Fight.

"There remained a good many open receptacles which it was hard to protect. Resort was had to the experiment of recruiting fish to live in these containers and to eat the mosquito eggs as fast as they were deposited. The first kind of fish tried was a disappointment. It was nervous, easily frightened and short-lived.

A hardy fish was next drafted, but this turned out to be so vigorous that it was always jumping out of the water. Finally a satisfactory fish was discovered. It ate larvae gluttonously and darted to the bottom of the barrel whenever the surface of the water was disturbed. Thus, by a variety of attacks—drainage, filling, oiling, screening, and the mobilizing of minnows, the Stegomyia was baffled.

"By early January, 1919, the control work was far advanced. There are the figures for successive months: January, eighty-five cases; February, forty-three; March, seventeen; April, three; May, two; June, none. Since that time no case has been reported.

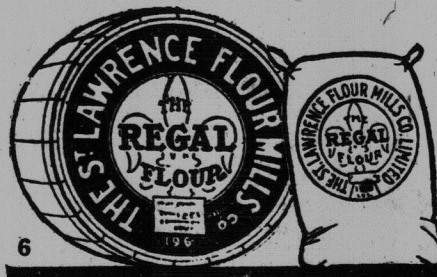
"It is too early to affirm that yellow fever has been completely eradicated from Guayaquil. Vigilance will not be relaxed for a year at least. Nevertheless, the possibilities of control have been convincingly demonstrated. Guayaquil, the chief seed-bed of yellow fever, has been free from the disease for months. The public has proclaimed its deliverance from a menace which had never been absent since 1842. General Gorgas's ambition to write 'The Last Chapter of Yellow Fever' seems no utopian dream.

A League of Nations for Health.

"In July, 1918, an outbreak in Guatemala had been reported. By quarantine isolation of cases and anti-mosquito measures the epidemic was brought under control before the end of the year. Later the disease appeared in Honduras, Salvador and Nicaragua.

"Offers of assistance were warmly welcomed by the governments of these countries, and the Foundation promptly dispatched a group of experts headed by General Gorgas (who has since died). In each country a special government commission was created to take charge of control measures. The body was composed of local physicians and sanitarians, with the representative of the International Health Board of the Rockefeller Foundation. Each country provided at least a part of the cost of control.

"The Foundation contributed the services of its expert staff members, and made additional appropriations toward the common budgets. These several commissions co-operated in an international programme for the protection of all the areas concerned. It was a practical League of Nations on a small scale and for a specific object. The plan was carried out energetically and thoroughly to such purpose that by the middle of



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October yellow fever had been practically banished from Central America.

To Guard Against Further Outbreak.

"The commissions are being continued in authority, and concerted efforts will be made during 1920 to guard against another outbreak. The governments of Nicaragua, Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have agreed to control Stegomyia mosquito breeding in all ports, to discover whether there are Stegomyia breeding places on board, and to maintain a six day quarantine against all travelers from southern Mexico until yellow fever has been eliminated from that country.

"With Guayaquil free from fever and with Central America protected, a good start has been made upon the worldwide project of extermination. Plans for the early future include the sending of commissions to Peru, where yellow fever appeared during the latter part of 1919, and, with the active co-operation of the British government, to the suspected area on the west coast of Africa. It is hoped also that a way will be found to banish yellow fever from southern Mexico. The league is widening its membership and is going confidently forward."

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