

*Fort William*—During last January, February, March and April, Fort William, Ont., experienced one of the most severe epidemics of typhoid fever. Dividing the period from January 15th to April 25th into weeks, one finds that the number of cases reported per week was as follows,—eleven, eleven, seventeen, fifteen, seventy-four, one hundred and sixty-one, one hundred and twelve, sixty-nine, thirty-two, fifteen, twenty, one, five and four. So it is seen to have been sudden in onset and to have subsided as quickly as it began. Arranged in chart form, this record makes a very interesting picture.

When first realizing that we were experiencing an epidemic, the first question of course was—What is the cause? And as is usual, the great source of infection was found to be the water supply, which was being contaminated in two ways, directly and indirectly.

The water supply was then taken from the Kaministiquia river at a point about midway between the two extremities of the town, which is situated right along the river banks. And into the river above the intake pipe drained a sewer, called the Ford street sewer. This sewer then was the main source of direct contamination, for three typhoid houses were discharging their excretions into the sewer, in the early part of January.

A second direct source was the Power house itself which contained typhoid cases and the excretions from these were got rid of through a box drain which was discharging quite close to the intake pipe.

The third direct source came from a coal dock settlement, about one mile above the intake pipe. From this settlement two cases were taken early in January.

Indirectly, the water supply was polluted by surface drainage from rain and snow.

These then were the first and most important causes of the epidemic; but the study of conditions showed the spread and continuance of the disease to be in a large measure due to contact cases. As there existed, a lack of isolation of patients, improper care of excreta and bed linen, and, lastly, an omission of disinfection of the hands of people nursing the sick.

A study of the record cases reported will show that the epidemic arose quickly and was assuming alarming proportions, when the population of about 8,000 people is considered. And it was realized by those in authority that drastic measures must be enforced to control the epidemic. And again a study of the figures shows how effectual were these measures.

These were undertaken by the Board of health, which systematically placarded all houses containing typhoid patients sent out notices of instruction to all houses and sent particular