

CONVENTION OF B. C. MUNICIPALITIES— (Continued)

ter of this kind should be brought to their attention so that when a propaganda is initiated, which we propose in the immediate future, they will have some comprehension of the importance of it, and as legislators in your own community that you will take an intelligent and sympathetic view of the movement.

In this report to the British Parliament there were several important suggestions made.

First, that there should be free diagnosis of the disease; Second, a free medical treatment.

Third, a campaign of education should be conducted pointing out the great drain on the natural increase of population from the presence of venereal disease.

Fourth, they also suggested that these diseases should be made "reportable".

You may not know the exact definition of a reportable disease. A reportable disease is one such as small-pox, or scarlet fever, which has to be reported to the medical officer, in order that the patient may be isolated. Other diseases, such as rheumatism, have not to be so reported. Australia is the only country in the world where general compulsory reporting of venereal diseases is enforced.

There are, at the present time, fears in the minds of many, that when the war is over, and the army disbanded, we will have an epidemic of such disease. If this assumption is correct, then this question will assume additional importance. If the future health of our country is to be safeguarded, I say that this fear is one reason for this question assuming this prominence at the present time. In Australia, the home of progressive legislation for some years, and particularly in Western Australia, great attention has been devoted to the prevention and treatment of social diseases. The procedure there is as follows:

The Federal Government of that Commonwealth makes a money grant to assist each of the States of the Federation in the prevention and cure of these diseases. The administration of these health laws is placed in the hands of the State legislatures, or bodies which correspond with our Provincial Governments, and the Local Governments, which correspond with our municipalities, in order to co-operate in the matter. That is the general outline of the conduct of this propaganda in Australia. Western Australia is the only part of the world where these diseases are made "reportable", in just the same way as small-pox and scarlet fever. Breaches of the law in the matter of reporting are punished as severely as those of other laws.

These are questions which will, in the near future, claim your attention as municipal legislators, as they come before us as provincial legislators, and as they will come before the Dominion Government, so that I think it would be as well for you to give this question serious consideration and see where our responsibility lies.

The Government of the United States have been quite active in dealing with this question, particularly since they entered the present war. In that country all the men affected with venereal diseases are registered. Then they are segregated; the hospitals are urged to co-operate, which they do, and they tell me today that the American Army is the army that has the fewest men laid up from these preventable diseases. I am pointing out these things to you to show their immense importance, and I have just touched on these illustrations to give you an indication of what the health departments of other countries are doing and how the local authorities are co-operating with them.

It will be interesting to you to know some of the things we are doing in this Province in connection with our public health. Health matters have not, in this Province nor in any Province of the Dominion, received the attention which the importance of the subject warrants.

I found, a year or two ago, that we were having many complaints in regard to the sanitation in our various camps throughout the Province. Now those of you who have read the press have seen criticisms of the health and living conditions in these places, particularly in the case of lumber and mining camps, etc. The criticism has not been so severe in the case of the larger camps, but it has been very severe in the smaller ones. In some cases these strictures were justified. The condition was largely, owing to the ignorance of the man in charge in respect to the most elementary sanitary rules. Now, we have devised the expedient of giving copies of health regulations to every camp in the Province, of which there are about eight hundred, including 140 new camps established this year. Now, all these

camps have been supplied with copies of health and sanitary regulations suitable to the existing conditions; then we have supplied them with pamphlets written in plain and unvarnished English, telling them what to do in so far as sanitation is concerned, with particular reference to their water supply and the disposal of sewage and of kitchen refuse. Attention was also called to the necessity of fresh air in sleeping quarters, etc. They have responded most generously to this propaganda and have been carrying out the suggestions with commendable zeal. Those in charge of larger plants have for some time realized that the health of their men is important, both from a provincial and from a national point of view. Men holding responsible positions realize this and so have responded with alacrity to suggestions made to them. I would like to point out the manner of supervision in the enforcement of these health regulations. Every Provincial Police constable is a health inspector. He may not know very much about health matters, but he has had pointed out to him a few important things that any intelligent man would notice, and any violations of the regulations he reports to the nearest health officer. The police force has responded to this additional work with commendable zeal. Now, what has been the result? I have taken the trouble to look into the figures demonstrating the effectiveness of this work. In 1913 we had considerable typhoid fever in this Province, — 600 in all; in 1916, 200; in 1917, 146; and for the first six months of this year, twenty cases. That is evidence, you see, of the beneficial effects of our propaganda, the benefit of education along health lines, and of enforcing our health regulations.

Consider what this means in dollars and cents to the individual, to the industrial concern, and to the nation. The national welfare is or should be our greatest concern. Then there is the question that all are interested in, and about which I have received resolutions from various public bodies, viz., the question of medical inspection of schools. It has been pointed out by you that the system we have had in the rural districts has not worked out very satisfactorily and in that I will agree with you. It is not very satisfactory, but it is a great deal better than nothing, and in fact if you can succeed in getting the class of medical men who become interested in that work, and an interested school board supporting him (and this last is of great importance), it works very well indeed. I think that in the rural districts you will have to have the "follow-up" system through nurses, so as to get the full benefit of the money expended. However, we trust to make some progress along these lines in the near future.

Coming to the great question of tuberculosis, you have just heard an able paper on that subject and we cannot hear too much about a question so important economically and socially. One out of every ten deaths in British Columbia last year was due to tuberculosis. Does not that one fact indicate to you that you have a great responsibility in seeing that your health regulations are enforced? Consider that question well. One person in every ten dies of a preventable disease, that is the very big question at this time that you, as municipal legislators, should carefully consider. Have you lived up to your official and civic responsibility? Tuberculosis wards and sanatoriums have been established. This will encourage our councils to spend a little money to help the propaganda in their own localities. This is as it should be, and as years go on, you will find that people will be more sympathetic towards these expenditures. I have found in my own department, that there is never any criticism of expenditures for health protection. You too, will find it in your municipalities. I am telling you this for your encouragement because I know and am satisfied of the difficulties you have in raising moneys. You have the same difficulties as we have, and when I say that I say a good deal. But you will find when you go on and take care of health problems, that you will receive strong financial and moral support. I do not want to be understood as throwing all the financial responsibility on municipalities for health work. My contention is this: that you have responsibilities as municipalities, we have responsibility as a Government, and the Dominion Government, too, has its responsibility, as has been admitted in the case of Australia. In my own department we have done something to assist, though not as much as I would like to have done, but we are going to carry on and do our best to solve the problem.

I would just like to point out one thing in conclusion. The Health Department asked that tuberculosis be made a "reportable disease", just the same as small-pox and typhoid