

While not wishing in any way to detract from the studies made in the realm of preventive medicine by foreign workers, it is not making too strong a claim to say that the most practical public health work has been done in Great Britain by men who were confronted with problems of disease consequent upon the rapid industrial development of that country. Suddenly, as it were, the environment of the people was changed from that of rural life to one attended with all the evils incident to and consequent upon a rapid and chaotic growth of towns and cities. The opportunities for study and research were many, but the methods whereby opinions were formed and conclusions reached were along lines the most difficult, and it was not until the chemist Pasteur led the way into the realm of microscopic plant life and the surgeon Lister worked on the intricacies of how to destroy these minute and unseen enemies of mankind, that the greatest progress was made in the realm of hygiene.

It will certainly be acknowledged that, considering the great importance of the subject of public health, covering as it does the individual and his environment, the centre of Empire has moved slowly though progressively forward during the last half century. Yet notwithstanding the progress made we find evidence of the inefficiency of the laws to inadequately meet the requirements of Great Britain at the time of its greatest danger. This was demonstrated at a time when physical fitness of the highest degree was required by the government to meet the demands of war. The Director General of the Medical Services in reporting on physical fitness of men offering themselves for enlistment at that time showed that 77 per cent. of the estimated population were urban residents and about 25 per cent. of these, some six million, were unable to rear their children under conditions favorable to health and physical fitness.

In referring to this deterioration, an eminent English authority says there is "no escape from the conclusion that the proportion of lads and youths physically unfit is alarming," and he adds, evidently viewing the subject from its most important standpoint:

"If this be true of the lads, is there any ground for hoping that the physical condition of their sisters is better? They are exposed to exactly the same injurious conditions, often in an aggravated form and there can be no doubt that their physical development suffers to at least an equal extent," and he continues: "We need women to be healthy mothers of robust children."

This brief reference applies to but one aspect of health conditions in Great Britain, but as environment is just what health laws, imperfectly applied by reason of local exigencies make it, we can roughly estimate the results achieved in that part of the Empire where the government has no competent central health bureau or department vested with power to enforce what is right and proper in the interests of the people.

It is only fair and proper to say that where the local machinery is the best the results achieved are the best, but, as a chain is no stronger than the strength of its weakest link, so it is with the national question of health. In these days of migration and rapid communication it becomes essential, yes imperative, in the interests of the nation, that public health administration should become centralized by a wise and proper combination of existing authorities, the central or federal authority maintaining the highest degree of efficiency by an oversight and by a directing and co-ordinating influence of the provincial authorities.

Canada has entered upon the race for national existence, a link in the chain of those nations which compose the greatest earth-girdling composite Empire which has ever been known. Each portion of this great Empire is to-day laying the foundations of the Greater Britain in order to ensure its perpetuity, and to this end the attention of governments and of the people themselves is being directed to many of the important factors entering into this, to us, great empire-building problem of the twentieth century. For instance, we are considering from an imperial point of view such problems as those of commerce, tariffs, and particularly the two great preventives of that international disease commonly known as "war," but more accurately described as "hell." I refer to the navy and the army, for which we are willing to tax our-