

Second Annual Report of the Board of Health of the Province of Quebec.

This report contains the record of the large amount of valuable work done by this energetic Board. There has been obtained from the Legislature a revision of the law on interments and disinterments, which enabled the Board to modify a great many provisions, which were either contrary to hygiene or, at least, insufficient for the protection of public health. Though there has been no epidemic of contagious diseases, a great many cases have been reported. Of the 4,729 cases there were diphtheria 2,294, scarlatina 942, typhoid fever 850, measles 641, and smallpox 1. These figures are far from stating the whole truth, for it is estimated that 63 per cent. of the cases occurring were not reported to the Board.

The report of the Bacteriologist contains much valuable information upon disinfection by formaline (quoted in the JOURNAL, February, p. 652) and the diphtheria diagnosis. Concerning the latter he has reached the following conclusions :

1. The culture method enables a positive diagnosis to be made in 90 per cent. of all cases of diphtheria when seen early.

2. The significance attaching to a negative result depends entirely upon the length of time which has elapsed since the onset of the disease, and the absence of bacilli from a case which has lasted often four or five days does not prove that it is not diphtheria : in any case where the course of the disease made it likely to be diphtheria, repeated re-examination is made.

3. In severe cases of suspicious angina, it is advisable not to delay the preliminary dose of antitoxin in order to learn the result of the bacteriological examination.

4. The greatest value of the bacteriological examination is in determining the necessity and the duration of isolation and quarantine, and if cases continue to appear, the throats of all persons exposed to contagion should be examined whether they show signs of disease or not. A swabbing to be taken post-mortem in all cases of death from croup.

5. The patients should not be released from quarantine, and the final disinfection of the premises should not be done until the bacilli have disappeared entirely from the affected part.

6. The bacilli have been shown to infect articles of clothing, furniture, etc., and these should be thoroughly disinfected, preferably by steam under pressure, and solutions of mercuric chloride. Fumigation by sulphur is unreliable in the majority of cases as commonly carried out.