

Questions

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The following answers, deposited with the Clerk of the house, are printed in the official report of debates pursuant to standing order 39:

POLIOMYELITIS STATISTICS

Question No. 85—Mr. McMillan:

1. How many cases of poliomyelitis were reported in Canada, province by province, during 1955 up to and including December 31?

2. How many cases, by provinces, were of the paralytic type?

3. How does the incidence of polio during 1955 compare with the five-year annual average for the years 1950-54 inclusive?

4. How many deaths were reported from polio during 1955 and how do these figures compare with the five-year average, 1950-54?

5. What are the results of the evaluation of the Salk vaccine as used in Canada during 1955?

Answer by: Mr. Martin:

1 and 2. With 1,028 cases of poliomyelitis of all forms reported across Canada up to December 31, the year 1955 goes on record as having the lowest rate reported in the past decade. Of the total cases reported, about one-half, or 544, were of the paralytic type. The following table, based on provisional figures, indicates the total number of cases and the number of paralytic cases, province by province, as well as the attack rates per 100,000.

Province	Total Cases	Rate per 100,000	Paralytic Cases	Rate per 100,000
Nfld.	15	3.6	12	2.9
P.E.I.	11	10.2	11	10.2
N.S.	114	16.7	55	8.0
N.B.	39	6.9	6	1.1
Que.	125	2.8	78	1.7
Ont.	178	3.4	79	1.5
Man.	30	3.5	13	1.5
Sask.	72	8.1	20	2.2
Alta.	214	20.1	124	11.6
B.C.	230	17.6	146	11.2
Canada	1,028	6.6	544	3.5

3. The extent of polio in Canada during 1955 was a little more than one-quarter of the average annual incidence over the past five years. This applies to both paralytic polio and total cases of polio, with the average number of cases per year from 1950 to 1954 amounting to 1,683 and 3,898 respectively. It should be noted, of course, that the five-year averages include the year 1953 during which Canada experienced the most serious polio epidemic in its history.

The relatively low incidence of polio was general throughout Canada, with the exception of British Columbia where the number of paralytic cases, 146, was actually higher than the five-year average of 139. As will be shown later, the use of the Salk vaccine produced the most striking results in this province where polio was most severe. In Nova Scotia, the total number of cases of all forms, 114, exceeded the five-year annual average of 91, but the 55 paralytic cases were significantly lower than the five-year average of 68. Of the ten provinces, British Columbia was hardest hit, with Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia following with 92 and 81 per cent respectively of the five-year annual average for paralytic cases.

Manitoba, on the other hand—where only 30 cases were reported, of which 13 were paralytic, and no deaths occurred—had the lowest incidence as compared with the five-year average, with ratios of four and three per cent respectively. Saskatchewan was next lowest with 72 cases of which 20 were paralytic. Total cases were about 13 per cent of the five-year annual average of 565, while paralytic cases represented about one-tenth of the annual average over the past five years of 187. It will be recalled that these two provinces were extremely hard hit during the serious epidemic of 1953.

In Newfoundland and New Brunswick polio occurred during 1955 at the rate of about one-quarter of the five-year annual average. In Quebec, where 125 cases were reported—of which 78 were paralytic—the ratio was about one-third of the five-year average figures of 350 and 203 respectively. Ontario had a relatively light incidence with 178 cases, or about 16 per cent of the five-year average of 1,054. Among the total cases, 79 were paralytic, or about 18 per cent of the five-year average of 416.

Although the attack rates in Alberta during 1955 were higher than in other provinces, in relation to the five-year annual average the 124 paralytic cases amounted to about 27 per cent. The total number of cases of all kinds, 214, was approximately 38 per cent of the five-year average of 585. In the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, no cases of any kind were reported during 1955.

4. As with its general incidence, there was also a marked decline in the number of deaths from polio last year with a provisional total of 28 reported as against 157 in the year before and an average of 230 deaths annually