

UNITED STATES

Fourth National Congress on Conservation

Arrangement with the fifteenth International Congress on Hygiene brought many foreign delegates to the fourth National Congress on Conservation, held at Indianapolis last month. Among those who contributed to the proceedings were: Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, Professor Irving Fisher of Yale University, Prof. L. H. Bailey, national authority on agriculture; Dr. Livingston Farrand, Dr. William P. Hornaday, preserver of wild animal life; Gifford Pinchot, and others of equal note.

An address on the "Conservation of the Human Race," was made at the congress by Dr. J. N. Hurty, of Indianapolis, ex-president of the American Public Health Association. He said in part:

"High authority says we are only fifty per cent. efficient; that we live out less than one-half the natural duration of life; that we consume twice as much food as is needed to maintain efficient life; that we waste as much as we use, and that one-half of all human beings born either die before reaching maturity or fall into the defective, delinquent or dependent classes.

"In these facts we find reasons why we waste the major portion of all our resources, and call it development. In these facts we find reasons for the existence of robber taxation and predatory business.

"For, a people who waste themselves will, of course, waste their natural resources. Therefore, the first, the most important, the fundamental conservation, is the conservation of human efficiency.

"A people who cannot be brought to a realization of the fact that they lead only half lives, and, who realizing will not mend will show the nations to come what fools the present mortals were."

Dr. Hurty denounced the indiscriminate use of patent medicine, and said: "At present we are in the patent medicine stage of ignorance from which we must emerge before real conservation of human life and energy can be realized."

We must learn the science of living, Dr. Hurty said further, and "the science of living begins at the mouth." All drugs, poisons, and improper foods should be kept away from the mouth, he advised, and that over-fatigue is another element which

causes great loss of human vitality and weakens the body so that it is attacked by diseases. The question of heredity should also be more thoroughly studied and the production of the hereditary insane and idiotic should be prevented.

Another interesting and important paper presented before the fourth National Conservation Congress was written, not by a physician nor a sanitarian, but by a business man, Mr. E. E. Rittenhouse, of the Equitable Life Assurance Company. Mr. Rittenhouse, in the opening paragraphs of this address, recognized the crucial point in the present situation. He said: "It takes money to carry on a great educational movement and it takes money to conduct a public health service. The war between preventable disease and death is therefore a struggle between the dollar and the death rate."

New York Association for Improving Condition of the Poor.

To ascertain why families sought its aid the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor made inquiries of applicants between Oct. 1, 1911, and June 30, 1912. There were 6,565 families questioned, and of these 1,605, it was found, were forced to seek aid through illness.

Tuberculosis caused 555 applications and accounted for 34 per cent. of those who gave illness as a cause. Rheumatism was next in the list of diseases, with 187 families affected by it. Then, in order, followed: Illness attending births, 161; kidney and heart disease, 156; anæmia, 156; operations resulting from injuries, 106; pneumonia, 99; children's contagious diseases, 48; paralysis and epilepsy, 48; eye and ear diseases, 45, and cancer and tumor, 41.

It may be argued that tuberculosis is as much a result as a cause of poverty, but as a cause its effects are apparent and indisputable. The conclusion of the association, from the figures, is that "some plan of effective home treatment must be found" for tuberculosis, for "it will be many years before there will be enough hospitals and sanatoria to accommodate all tuberculosis patients." That this condition is not pe-