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Address.

THE WORK OF RED CROSS ORGANIZATIONS IN RELATION TO THE PREVENTIVE MEDICINE OF THE FUTURE.*

BY SIR ARTHUR NEWSHOLME, K.C.B., M.D.

It is difficult to give, as I am invited to do, in brief space and without the detailed reports of proceedings in which I took part, a clear conception of the conclusions reached at the extremely important International Conference of Red Cross Societies which was held in Cannes during April of this year.

I shall endeavor, however, to state the conception which gave rise to the conference and to give some of the conclusions reached by the experts in a number of departments of medicine on which are being based the initial steps for the organization of a new departure in Red Cross work.

It is unnecessary to remind actual Red Cross workers of the vast amount of beneficent work, rendered possible by the gifts of possibly half the American population, which has been carried out by your agencies in the various belligerent countries. The record of saving life, of alleviation of suffering, and in other instances of prevention of greater suffering, is one calling

* An address delivered at American Red Cross Headquarters, Washington, D. C., May 2, 1919.

for gratitude and congratulation. This work has been rendered possible by an unrivaled combination of trained and relatively untrained workers. The trained workers were indispensable; but without the invaluable assistance of intelligent, previously untrained, voluntary workers, a vast mass of suffering would have been left unalleviated and unrelieved.

This work in the main has been directed toward the healing of the sick and wounded, but not entirely so; for most interesting and valuable work has been done among the civilian population of the belligerent countries, in providing medical assistance, in special work for the treatment of tuberculosis, in securing medical assistance and advice for mothers and their children, and in caring for those who have been rendered homeless by ruthless war. In America, also, Dr. Clark informs me that around military camps in States in which public health administration is imperfect, an organization has been evolved, through coöperation between the Central Public Health Service and the American Red Cross, by means of which territories about camps have been "cleaned up," the risks of malaria and other communicable diseases, including venereal diseases, have been minimized, a good milk supply assured, and elementary sanitation established. It is evident, therefore, that already the

Red Cross, when local sanitary arrangements were imperfect or in abeyance, has taken upon itself the burden of the emergency preventive measures as well as of measures of relief.

In so doing it has acted wisely. Preventive work is always more productive in results than relief work. It is also more economical. It is wiser as well as more humane to erect a parapet along the top of a dangerous cliff than to provide an ambulance at its base.

I do not wish, however, to give countenance to the notion that prevention and treatment of disease must be regarded as antitheses. The two are parts of a whole and not distinct and separate. This may be illustrated by two of the most serious diseases to which humanity is subject, tuberculosis and syphilis. Of these, tuberculosis is probably the chief producer of dependent widows and orphans; while syphilis, on the authority of Sir William Osler, must be regarded as third among the killing diseases. For the prevention of both of these diseases treatment forms an indispensable preventive measure. Every arrangement conducing to the comfort or recovery of the tuberculosis patient diminishes the risk of massive infection in his family; and the prompt treatment of syphilis by arseno-benzol preparations is the most effective means for securing his immediate disinfection as well as his progress toward cure. And even when the elementary personal infection is absent, it can be argued with justice that the prompt and efficient medical treatment and nursing of the sick not only diminishes the duration of individual disability, but prevents the impoverishment and enfeeblement of other members of the same family.

But for an increasing proportion of the total sickness of humanity, total prevention is now possible, and I need scarcely cite the almost complete disappearance of typhus in western nations in peace time, the rapid decline of enteric fever, and the improvement in regard to a large number of other diseases. The number of preventible diseases is being steadily increased, as investigation progresses, and as our knowledge of the already ascertained laws of health increases and becomes disseminated among the general population.

It was, therefore, a happy inspiration of Mr. Davison, the President of the American Red Cross, which led to his calling together the international conference of Red Cross Societies

at Cannes, with a view to considering means by which the worldwide activities of Red Cross workers might be utilized for the prevention of illness as well as for the treatment of sick and wounded mankind. It is a vision of the future which, I think, will have a great influence on the welfare of mankind, if—as I am confident will be the case—the conception fires the souls of the multitude of Red Cross workers and contributors in every civilized country, and leads them to determine against demobilization of their forces, and to continue their beneficent activities against the horrors of peace, which, in the aggregate, are even more serious to mankind than those of war.

The statement that the devastations produced by disease in times of peace are even greater than the loss of life from war may be illustrated by the experience of England and Wales. In the four years, 1911-14, immediately preceding the World War, 2,036,466 persons died in England and Wales, while, according to official figures, the total loss of men during the 4¼ years of war, was 835,743, including 161,800 presumed dead. The war figures give the entire loss for the British Empire; but it cannot be far from the truth to state that war on the gigantic scale of the war from which we have just emerged has killed in Great Britain about one-third as many as have died in the civilian population in a corresponding period. I do not lose sight of the fact that a large proportion of the civilian deaths occur in ripe old age, and that 28% of the total civilian deaths occur among children under five, while those destroyed by war are adults and the most virile of our race. But the greater part of the deaths in childhood, as well as in adult life, before old age is reached, are preventible; and in the future will be prevented, given adequate research, intelligent and unsparing application of knowledge already in our possession, and an avoidance of the public parsimony which, in relation to public health, constitutes the most serious form of extravagance. That is the idea which Mr. Davison and his collaborators place before us; and it was to devise plans to this end and to enlist the continued coöperation of all Red Cross workers that the conference was called at Cannes.

The conference held a number of general meetings in which the general policy to be pursued was discussed and then divided itself into

sections dealing with the following subjects: preventive medicine, child welfare, tuberculosis, malaria, venereal diseases, nursing, information and statistics. These sections were not selected as covering the entire group of preventive medicine, but as forming branches of work in which early investigation and action appeared to be most desirable.

But first of all the lines of general policy were discussed.

It is evident that although measures for the prevention of disease constitute a definite governmental function—neglect of which is treason to the communal welfare—even in the more advanced countries our governing bodies have not lived up to their potentialities. In scarcely a single sphere of its work can it be said of any government or of any local authority, that what could be done to prevent disease and to avoid human suffering has been completely accomplished. To say this is merely to express the imperfections of humanity singly, or the greater imperfections of Committees of Councils entrusted with the public purse and the public weal.

There is, and I think always will be, ample scope for supplementation of official work by voluntary workers, for the experimentation in new and promising work which it is so difficult to initiate in official circles, and for the undertaking of necessary work by devoted volunteers when public opinion and officialdom refuse to undertake it.

This disposes of the argument that Red Cross activities in the prevention of disease merely prevent the development of official work. The true object of all voluntary workers is to stimulate official public health work, and when in any sphere the latter is fully developed to welcome the disappearance or reduction of voluntary non-official work, or seek the new means of social help which are always waiting for devoted workers to initiate.

The conference agreed that the new work of the Red Cross would naturally divide itself into two parts: an International Bureau, and National Organizations. The duty of these and their relation to each other will be more clearly seen in the light of experience. The International Bureau in the scheme proposed for the consideration of the conference—which received general approval—would act as a great centre for collecting information on various public

health subjects, and for digesting it and subsequently distributing it by means of special publications, or periodical journals, or on application from those requiring specialized information. It would also act as a means of educating the general public on urgent problems affecting its welfare; and it would be utilized as a centre, organizing in less favored communities, missions which would undertake local investigations and remedial work. These surveys and activities would be intended rather as demonstration centres than as permanent organizations, the intention being to withdraw them as soon as the necessary work could be carried on by local Red Cross or other organizations.

It was suggested that the central bureau should comprise a number of branches dealing with epidemic diseases, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, child welfare, nursing, and other subjects, collating and analyzing information and distributing it through the medium of the National Red Cross of each country.

Such a central bureau, it will, I think, be agreed, will be of the greatest value to all social and public health workers, while not clashing with any existing agency.

The proposed organization of Red Cross agencies for preventive work has already received an imprimatur in the draft league of peace; and it would be appropriate that its headquarters should be near if not side by side with the future home of that league. If it receives the full development for which we hope, it will form, perhaps, a chief instrument in securing peace and continued happiness for mankind.

The relation of the central bureau to National Red Cross societies will be one of mutual coöperation. The central bureau will provide information and facilities for national work; the actual work will need to be carried out in each country nationally and in the main from funds supplied by that country.

It is not intended that the National Red Cross shall undertake, much less compete with, work already being carried out either by local authorities or by existing voluntary associations. If, for instance, there is a society concerning itself with child-welfare, or the prevention of tuberculosis, or of venereal diseases, the National Red Cross would naturally give such assistance as it could through its voluntary workers in the special work, while leaving untouched existing arrangements. If no such

societies existed the National Red Cross might advantageously assist in their formation, retiring as soon as the separate organization was working.

In countries in which official and existant voluntary agencies scarcely exist, more active and continued direct work of the Red Cross organization will be called for; in such countries assistance may be needed from the central international bureau.

Evidently there are many points of central and national administration requiring and now receiving fuller and more detailed consideration; and all that need now be said is that it appears to me certain that International and National Red Cross organizations which will concern themselves with the prevention of disease as well as with the relief of suffering will be formed, and that they will have pregnant influence in hastening the reduction of human disease.

The second week's deliberation of the conference at Cannes was filled with meetings of Committees of experts and more formal sectional meetings, at which lines of policy on certain specific subjects were formulated for the later deliberations of Red Cross Societies in Geneva.

It is unnecessary to summarize in detail the scientific recommendations reached in various subjects. It may suffice, as indicating the wide scope of the field of work about to be surveyed, that among the more urgent problems of preventive medicine priority was given to advocacy of combined efforts for the prevention of the major pests of mankind, of the provision of laboratory assistance in the diagnosis of disease, and in securing more accurate vital statistics and improvements in public health legislation.

In child welfare work, the importance of health visiting, of child welfare centres, of an improved midwifery service, and of continuous observation of children under school age as well as scholars was emphasized.

In regard to tuberculosis, stress was laid on the essential point that measures against this disease must embrace the whole of the sick lifetime of the patient, and must include, when necessary, measures for obviating the results arising from the fact that the partially recovered patient commonly is unable to earn an economic wage.

In the prevention of venereal diseases a similarly wide outlook was advocated, including the

necessary social and moral as well as medical measures against their spread.

In the preceding brief statement I have endeavored to indicate the main outlines of the proposals considered by the Cannes Conference. My statements are merely those of a participator in the Conference; and it is evident that outside of the momentous decision to endeavor to retain mobilized the forces of Red Cross organizations, and to secure their assistance in the great impending struggle against disease, no final decisions have been made. The growth of the central and of each National organization in the desired direction must necessarily occupy time, though I believe development will be rapid once the great ideal is visualized clearly by Red Cross workers in each country.

I have referred in an earlier part of these remarks to the imperfections of governments, central and local, in the control of disease. These imperfections indicate one of the most promising fields in which voluntary agencies, like the Red Cross, can assist toward greater efficiency. Both local and central authorities are elected by the people themselves and the laws and regulations for the promotion of the public health—and what is even more important, the enforcement of existing regulations—depend for their efficiency on public opinion, which we can all assist in forming. The natural tendency on the part of the social enthusiast who has been disappointed in his efforts at reform is either to retire from the fight or to organize a voluntary organization having the same end in view. This last may sometimes be the best line to pursue, though in that case endeavor should be made to secure friendly relationship with, if not also the active coöperation of the local authority. But often the most hopeful plan is to fight the local elections and to secure the election on local governing bodies of men and women who will give these bodies no peace until the necessary reforms are secured.

If we are to be helpful we must be kindly and charitable in our criticism of local authorities. Nothing has made it so difficult to secure good men and women to undertake the burden of local government as the indiscriminating and uncharitable criticism aimed at those engaged in it. Criticism of members of our central and local governing bodies is not seldom deserved; but critics are too often those who will give no assistance in the work which, with insufficient

knowledge, they villify. When we hear of scandals in administration, let us have a sense of proportion, remembering the grosser corruption evidenced, for instance, in Pepys' Diary, and especially remembering that the best way to remove corruption is by ourselves taking a part in the work of central or local government, or by steadily upholding those who are doing so with integrity.

The onlooker, whether it be on voluntary or on official work for the commercial good, has his duty to perform as well as the worker. It is his duty to make himself acquainted with local conditions and with local administration, even though he takes no part in it. A chief need at the present time is an interested study by every adult of all the phases of local administration in each district; and in my view Red Cross organizations will be rendering inestimable service to the community if they succeed in educating the public conscience to this effect. Increased local patriotism is urgently needed if the prospective fight against disease by the Red Cross Societies is to succeed, and if the further triumphs of preventive medicine within our reach are to be secured. To this end enthusiasm will need to be infused into official public health administration as well as into the work of voluntary agencies; and it is only by developing all the possibilities of our governing bodies as well as of voluntary societies and by securing the closest coöperation between the two that the new ideal of the Red Cross organization can be realized.

Original Articles.

THE TREATMENT OF CARCINOMA OF THE SKIN WITH RADIUM. THE RESULTS IN THE CASES TREATED AT THE COLLIS P. HUNTINGTON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

COMPILED BY CHANNING C. SIMMONS, M.D., BOSTON.
[From the Cancer Commission of Harvard University.]

THE following is an analysis of the cases of carcinoma of the skin that have applied for treatment at the Collis P. Huntington Hospital from 1912 to 1916, inclusive. There were 259 cases diagnosed clinically as rodent ulcer, epithelioma, epidermoid carcinoma, or carcinoma, the actual term employed depending more on the individual making the diagnosis than on the type of cell forming the tumor. At

one time an attempt was made to remove a specimen for pathological examination from every case, but this was found impracticable as a routine and was abandoned; consequently the diagnosis is clinical in the greater number of the cases. We have pathological reports on 51 cases, however, and have been struck by the fact that a number of cases diagnosed clinically as being of the basal cell type proved microscopically to be prickle cell carcinoma.

The policy of the hospital has been not to use radium in all cases of malignant disease applying for treatment but to advise operation if it seems best in a given case. Patients referred to the hospital are considered as being seen in consultation and advice is given; or, if they are suitable cases, they are accepted for radium treatment. In certain of the milder cases in which the growth is favorably situated, operation gives a better immediate result and a greater hope of permanent cure. In another class of advanced cases operation, to remove the greater portion of the growth, followed by radium treatment, is the treatment of choice. Much can be accomplished by this method in advanced carcinoma of the cheek, for example, in which the upper jaw and orbit are extensively involved. Life is prolonged and the wound made clean even if the disease cannot be completely eradicated. Most of the cases referred to the hospital are suitable for radium treatment and can be divided roughly into two classes,—those in which a permanent cure is to be expected and those in which the disease is extensive and in which radium is used as a palliative measure to retard the rate of growth.

Radium is particularly valuable in the treatment of skin cancer arising about the orbit. Less deformity of the lids results by the destruction of the growth in this manner than by operation, which can always be performed later if the radium treatment is unsuccessful. Operation, in many instances, implies loss of sight of the eye by reason of destruction of the lids and later infection, or the position of the growth makes enucleation necessary. In carcinoma of the foregoing region, as well as on the nose and parts of the cheek, the final cosmetic results following radium treatment are better than those following operation. (Cases 1 and 2.) On the other hand, in some cases, especially where the growth is situated about the ear or on the cheek, operation, followed by a plastic flap or skin graft, gives a better result.