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Report of the Ninth Annual Conference

By F. S. Jimison, R.S.

THE following is a summary of the interesting and informative program of the ninth annual conference of the National Association of Sanitarians, held at El Centro, California, October 12th and 13th.

The meetings were attended by over 100 sanitarians from the Western States.

We were honored by the presence of our distinguished speakers and by James R. Scott, M.D., Health Officer of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and George M. Uhl, M.D., Health Officer of Los Angeles, California. Mr. C. W. Clark, Secretary of the Oregon Association of Sanitarians, was also present and extended an invitation for us to attend the meeting of their association in February.

Friday Meetings

President Edward Beale, R.S., of San Diego, California, presided over the opening session.

Hugh T. Osborne, Supervisor of Imperial County, California, gave address of welcome and traced the relationship between the development of his county and improvements in sanitation. He stressed the need for adequately staffed and trained full-time health units.

The Sanitarian and the Control of Communicable Disease

Dr. Miriam Hubbell, Health Officer of Imperial County, gave a comprehensive report on the importance of the work of sanitarians and their work in the control of communicable diseases. I will not outline Dr. Hubbell's paper now as it is to be published in a future edition of THE SANITARIAN.

The Marines and DDT

The highlight of the Friday morning meeting was a talk by Captain Joseph E. Carney, Medical Officer, El Centro Marine Aviation Base, who explained his experience in the control of mosquito-borne diseases in the South Pacific Islands. He stated that the Marines were "completely sold" on DDT as a mosquito, fly, ant, cockroach and general insecticide. He further stated that many commercial DDT oil solutions are made by first dissolving DDT in an organic solvent, then dissolving this solution in kerosene; that the Marines do not believe in using the organic solvent because most such solvents are more toxic than DDT. The Marines use a 5% DDT and kerosene solution

made by dissolving DDT powder directly in kerosene. He recommended applying this at a rate of one quart to 250 sq. ft. of wall surface and stated that one application on an inside wall is effective for at least three months. On outside walls, in the rainy tropics, one application lasted two to three weeks. For use in kitchens, etc., he recommended applying DDT to walls with a hand or power-operated sprayer; to screens with an ordinary paint brush.

Capt. Carney stated that DDT is very effective for controlling mosquito larvae in ponds, streams, etc. Whereas 15 to 20 gallons of ordinary oil are required to treat an acre of water, a single quart of 5% DDT solution accomplished more effective results. Smaller islands were almost completely rid of all flies and mosquitoes by dusting and spraying from airplanes.

He stated that, in spite of the tremendous amount of DDT used by persons working under his supervision, there were practically no cases of illness and there were no fatalities from its use. The cases of illness that did occur resulted from men having leaky pressure tanks of DDT-kerosene solution strapped to their backs. Constant exposure of the skin to this DDT-oil mixture caused symptoms to develop in the following order, depending upon the amount and length of exposure: loss of appetite, nausea, occasional vomiting, dizziness, occasional prostration.

Capt. Carney ended his talk by showing an army training film which clear-

ly showed the difference between the various types of mosquitoes; by micro-photography, he showed the entire life cycle of mosquitoes from the time the female laid the eggs until the adults hatched from the pupae.

In-Service Training for Sanitarians

The Friday afternoon meeting opened with a talk by Dr. Ellis Sox, Chief of Local Health Services of the California State Health Department. Doctor Sox stressed the need for "in-service" training for sanitarians and explained that the state is expanding its facilities for assisting local health departments for developing in-service training programs. He pointed out that, as in all health work, more lasting results can be accomplished through public education than by legal methods. (We were glad to note that the Los Angeles program of in-service training, carried on for the last several years, is the same general type that Doctor Sox proposes for other areas of the state.) Doctor Sox stated that the state will continue to make funds available for sanitarian training programs.

Navy's Health Experience in Southern California

Lt. Commander George R. Underwood (MC) in charge of the Navy's epidemiological unit for this district, complimented Southern California health departments on their cooperation with the Navy and expressed satisfaction that this cooperation averted what might have been serious epidemics from overcrowding and other wartime conditions.



Utah Section Sanitarians' Delegation

He stated that the Southern California climate is "a healthy climate from a standpoint appreciated by few lay persons." From his experience he believes that the relatively low humidity and the cool nights have been responsible for preventing outbreaks of malaria; that although we have a few malaria and other tropical disease bearing mosquitoes in this area there have been no verified cases of locally acquired, tropical type, mosquito-borne diseases. Dr. Underwood does not believe that the organisms that cause malaria, filariasis and dengue fever are likely to be transmitted in this area.

He said that from an epidemiological standpoint this is an interesting area. Plague is endemic but fortunately there have been no outbreaks. Typhus is endemic and again fortunately there have been relatively few cases reported and these are usually scattered. He attributed the fortunate freedom from large epidemics of these diseases to the fact that climatic conditions may cause most of the disease organisms to die within the insect vector before they can be transmitted to humans.

Municipal Sewage Problems

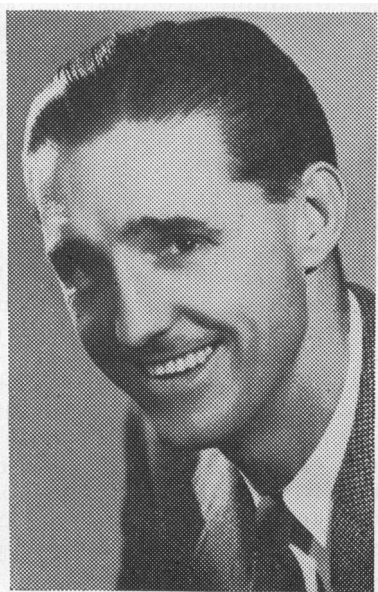
Mr. B. D. Phelps, now Assistant Port Director of San Diego, in a talk illustrated with charts, blue prints and samples of sewage and sewage sludge, explained the San Diego sewerage and sewage disposal system. He explained how he had built a large section of their intercepting sewer with municipally employed labor at a cost of several million dollars less than the lowest contractors

bid. He stated that their relatively simple primary sedimentation type sewage disposal system satisfactorily eliminated beach pollution. He stated that they have a constant demand for their heat-dried sewage sludge.

Saturday Meetings

Conference Chairman, Russell R. Brooks, R.S., of El Centro, presided over the Saturday meetings.

Mr. Wm. G. Duflock, Secretary and Manager of the El Centro Chamber of Commerce, welcomed the sanitarians and gave a brief talk which was enjoyed



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Secretary and Manager, Chamber of Commerce
El Centro, California

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by all. He also warned the delegates that they were on their own below the border.

Water Bacteriology

Dr. Claude Zobell of Scripps's Oceanographic Institute opened the Saturday morning meeting with an extremely well organized discussion on water bacteriology. He pointed out that coliform organisms (from the intestinal tract) were ideal indicators of water pollution because they are never found in natural water that is not subject to pollution; that if allowed to stand in water for a long time, they die. Their investigations show that coliform organisms found in large numbers in quarantined sections of Santa Monica Bay are seldom found at a point 10 miles off shore from the Hyperion Sewer outlet.

In addition to a description of the laboratory procedures for examining water and a discussion of water-borne diseases, Doctor Zobell told of an interesting series of tests and observations on bottled water from ollas. He pointed out how bottled water companies exercise all necessary precautions in filling bottles with safe water. He said that some of the companies advertise double, triple or even five seals on the cork to prevent bacteria contamination. In spite of this Doctor Zobell frequently found evidences of gross contamination in the water from olla faucets. Upon investigation they noted that many bottled water company drivers use the corner filling station toilet facilities, fail to wash their hands, grab a five-gallon bottle by the neck, remove the cork, place the palm of their hand over the bottle opening, invert the bottle and then when removing their hand, wash most of the bacteria from their hand into the olla.

They also found some extremely insanitary practices in wiping and scrubbing the inside of ollas by bottled water delivery men. He recommended an educational and perhaps enforcement program that would eliminate these insanitary practices.

Value of Registration of Sanitarians

Mr. Charles L. Senn, Director of Sanitation, Los Angeles City Health Department, spoke on the value of registration of sanitarians to the public health and

to the national welfare. At the last session of the California Legislature a law was adopted requiring that sanitarians employed after January 1, 1945, must qualify through education, experience and examination for registration by the State Department of Health. The law does permit the employment as "assistant sanitarians" persons not meeting all of the State requirements. Within two years after their employment these "assistants" must either qualify for registration or be dismissed. Persons now engaged as sanitarians are almost automatically registered under a "grandfather's clause."

Mr. Senn said that sanitarians blanketed in under the "grandfather's clause" cannot rest on their laurels. They will have to keep on studying, reading current articles and improving themselves to keep up with the newer men who must qualify by registration.

"In-service" training programs conducted by the sanitarians organization should continue to expand. All local health departments should carry on regular training programs for all sanitarians. In addition, wherever possible, schools and universities should establish night courses for sanitarians. These would be attended by "old timers" already registered as well as by new men hired as "assistants."

The level to which the state can raise the standards will be determined to a large extent by the educational facilities available for sanitarians. "Supply and demand" will be a large determining factor. Sanitarians should all work toward urging the provision of training programs in local schools and universities so an adequate supply of well trained men will be available. A night course of approximately 30 semester unit credits is being seriously considered by University of Southern California. Marquette University and several others are considering establishing similar courses. Eventually sanitarians will be required to have at least a few years of full time university training.

The California registration law should serve as an example for the nation. If properly carried out, this will be a big step toward providing better public service in the important field of environmental sanitation.

General Health Program

Dr. Alex M. Lesem, Health Officer of San Diego, discussed the importance of sanitarians being thoroughly familiar with the activities of other workers in their departments. He explained how nurses and sanitarians should work hand in hand to correct serious housing conditions. The sanitarian, physician and nurse should form a team to investigate epidemics of diseases known to be commonly caused by faulty sanitation. Dr. Lesem said he has noticed a marked improvement in the quality of the work of sanitarians during his twenty years' experience as a health officer. Their interest in the work and the cooperation and support they receive from the public have greatly improved.

The Saturday afternoon session was devoted to committee reports, resolutions and election of officers.

The Newly Elected Officers Are:

President—Roscoe C. Davis, R.S., California State Health Dept.

Vice-President—E. R. Shields, R.S., Bountiful, Utah.

Jr. Past President—Edward Beale, R.S., City Health Dept., San Diego, Calif.

Treasurer—Charles H. Ziegler, R.S., City Health Dept., Los Angeles, Calif.

Executive Secretary—H. H. McMullan, R.S., County Health Dept., Los Angeles, Calif.

Board of Directors

(Terms Expiring 1948)

Wm. L. Nunes, R.S., City Health Dept., Los Angeles, Calif.; Melvin J. Olsen, R.S., County Health Dept., Sacramento, Calif.; Allyne R. Kendall, R.S., City Health Dept., San Diego, Calif.

Board of Examiners

Clifford F. Baughman, R.S., Kern County Health Dept., Bakersfield, Calif., was re-elected.

By change of By-Laws, all presidents of sections of the N. A. S. automatically become members of the Board of Directors.

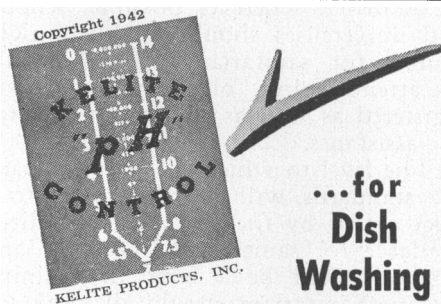
All other changes of the By-Laws and Resolutions passed will be in the Secretary's Report on the Conference.

The conference ended with an excellent banquet in Mexicali.

Thanks is again extended to Conference Chairman, Russell R. Brooks, R.S., and to all those who assisted him in making this ninth annual conference a success.

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