

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Highlights Of 19th Annual Educational Conference

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Through trials and tribulations of all kinds, the NAS goes marching forward in its drive to help its members, and all Sanitarians, in all respects.

The 19th Annual Educational Conference held in Boston, Massachusetts this year, August 22 through 26, exemplified this fact most forcefully. Despite hurricanes, floods and a polio epidemic unprecedented in the history of this region, the Conference was considered a success, particularly from the standpoint of the excellence of its educational program. There follows a brief resumé of the papers presented. The complete papers will appear in future issues of THE SANITARIAN.

“The Millipore Filter vs Standard Methods in the Bacterial Examination of Water”—Professor Ralph L. France, Head, Department of Bacteriology and Public Health, University of Massachusetts.

The Millipore Filter offers considerable improvement over present standard methods, particularly in the matter of time saved—from the present one to five days to as short as 18 or 20 hours. One of the principle differences between this and the standard filter is that the Millipore Filter permits the growth of bacteria on itself.

Professor France concluded by saying that although he felt the filter had great possibilities, at present he did not think it could be used by untrained technicians; that a lot of research must still be done on it; and that much serious consideration should be given to the matter of continuing to use the coliform group as an index of pollution and to the possibility of using different indices of pollution for the particular type of water or objective for which the water is being tested.

“Enteric Disease: A Study of the Transmission Spectrum”—John Ayres, MD., MPH., Commissioner of Health, City of Springfield, Massachusetts.

Contrary to popular belief, staphylococcus toxin does not act on the intestinal tract but rather passes through the intestinal membrane into the bloodstream and from there to the part of the brain which has to do with vomiting, thus producing the typical symptom of staphylococcus food intoxication. Salmonellosis produces a bloody flux which is the result of direct action on the intestinal tract, whereas typhoid fever, produced by one of the salmonellas, acts on the blood. These examples indicate that although many diseases enter the body by means of the gastrointestinal tract, the effects of the disease may be produced by other parts of the body. In view of this fact, in order to get a true classification or better picture of the epidemiology of these diseases, it is perhaps better to classify them according to source, avenues of spread, and new hosts. Only with such information can proper counter measures be set up, directed either at the source, the avenue of spread, or the new host.

"Problems in Atmospheric Pollution and Possible Relation to Man Made Diseases"—Dr. Roy E. Albert, U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, Washington, D. C.

Radioactive dust now constitutes about one-fourth of what is called atmospheric pollution, although this differs considerably from the usual type of pollution which ordinarily consists of industrial wastes. Radioactive pollution can only be detected by instruments; the principal source of this type pollution these days is from the detonation of atomic weapons and is called "fall out".

Man is affected by radioactive materials in different ways. For example, he may be exposed to a radioactive cloud as it goes by and receive external radiation. When the material settles out, he can inhale it; or, if it falls on the ground, he can swallow it in the form of dust; or it can be leached out in the soil, taken up by plants, and get into man when he eats the plants.

However, the peace-time danger from atmospheric pollution due to radioactive material is still a matter of conjecture, and the AEC feels that this is a relatively minor point.

"Changing Horizons in Food Sanitation and Environmental Control"—Jerome B. Trichter, Assistant Commissioner, New York City Health Department.

After many years of applying the same techniques in restaurant inspection procedure, it is about time that new techniques be developed. Instead of looking at the walls and ceilings to see if they are clean, more attention should be devoted to the actual operation of the restaurant—how long certain foods are kept on hand—what foods are reused, etc. Sanitarians should be thoroughly familiar with this restaurant operation phase, as in this way they can cooperate better with the operators while at the same time detect practices which may be harmful.

New York City's self-inspection program permits the operator himself to be his own inspector, or hire a qualified individual to do this work for him. In either case, the Health Department Sanitarian maintains control over the situation by periodic inspections.

"New Techniques in the Protection of Your Milk Supply, From Producer to Consumer"—Archie Freeman, Senior Sanitary Engineer, Regional Milk and Food Consultant, Region No. 2, Public Health Service Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Inasmuch as this paper has already been sent in to THE SANITARIAN, and should be coming out very shortly, no comment will be made on this paper at this time.

"How the Sanitarian Fits Into the Activities of the National Sanitation Foundation"—Walter F. Snyder, Executive Director, National Sanitation Foundation, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

It is necessary that we take stock and determine what the end product is in this matter of public health. What are we trying to sell? Once we have decided what we are trying to sell, it is necessary that we take the buyer of our product—the public—into very serious consideration. The public health of the future must be not only an engineering science and a medical science—it must be a social science, as well.

Today we should consider health in positive rather than negative terms. Instead of preventing disease, we should be promoting health.

The Sanitarian has his finger on the pulse of the entire community and can develop into one of the biggest factors in the public health field provided he broadens his philosophy to encompass the demands of the public in matters of public health. We are selling ourselves short when we talk only of restaurant sanitation because the field is much larger than that—we are responsible also for the sanitation of food in the home, in the church dinners, in schools, private clubs and many other places. Therefore, instead of talking about a "restaurant sanitation program" we should be talking about a "food protection program for the nation".

"Solving the Sanitarians' Problems In Sewage Disposal"—Clarence L. Sterling, Jr., Deputy Commissioner and Director, Division of Sanitary Engineering, Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

With the low down payment plan of buying homes, many subdivisions are going in all over the country without regard to the important matter of proper sewage disposal. Many times these subdivisions are located where the land is poor for private sewage disposal; and at other times where it is difficult to connect to a sewer system. There is no substitute for a sewer system, but when it is impossible to construct one, it is necessary to face the problem and design adequate sewage disposal systems.

There is a need for educating the public, the loan associations, the home owner himself as to what is involved in local sewage treatment and maintenance without proper endorsement by public health authorities. There is usually some solution that can be worked out for about 95% of the land, if the private sewage disposal system is properly designed and located. Collective works for individual houses does not succeed unless these works have the proper organization to maintain them and operate them.

"Sanitary Inspection of Food Manufacturing Establishments"—Mr. Hart, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health Education and Welfare.

Present-day processing methods involve sifting out rat hairs, feces, etc., and therefore, these cannot be detected by ordinary inspection methods; but the liquid wastes of these animals cannot be sifted out. Accordingly, the only safeguard is factory inspection of foods. Dependence on laboratory testing is a wasteful procedure and many times does not work. For adequate factory inspection, the Sanitarian must know the factory and search out all possible sources of contamination. He must make it difficult for rodents and insects to attack, and easy for management to fight attack. Prevention is easier and cleaner than eradication.

There follows a brief summary of actions taken during the business session of the Conference.

In his message, outgoing President Floyd M. Miller exhorted the incoming officers to continue to work toward placing the organization more and more on a sound business basis. One step in this direction was President Miller's suggestion that the organization accept "Sustaining Memberships" as a means of aiding the organization financially. Efforts must be continued to get constantly greater recognition for the Sanitarian through local as well as national publicity. In this respect, the possibility of getting a "National Sanitarian Week" proclaimed by Congress was moved a step closer to realization during the past year because of President Miller's personal discussion of the matter with Congressman Brooks. The organization should continue an all-out effort toward this objective.

In his report, Executive Secretary Davis brought out some of the items of expense which seem small in themselves but which add up to sizable amounts and help deplete the treasury. Some of these items are changes of address, postage, supplies (stationery, application forms, membership cards, etc.). Although some of these items are necessary and inevitable, others could be eliminated with the cooperation of all members. For example, it cost \$65.00 in postage to send out delinquent notices last year. Much of the Executive Secretary's time is lost to constructive efforts because of having to handle details which should never be sent to headquarters. For instance, requests for information should be carefully analyzed, as many times it is possible to get the information either from the Minutes of Annual Conferences, the magazine, or other material put out by headquarters.

The Treasurer's Report, rendered by Treasurer Fleming, indicated a total cash balance as of June 30, 1955 (the end of the fiscal year) of \$2,080.71. The 1955-56 budget adopted by the General Assembly is approximately \$13,000.00.

Editor A. Harry Bliss brought out in his "Report of the Publications Committee" that because of the resignation of former Managing Editor Charles E. Steele, it was necessary to reorganize the publications staff. During this reorganization, Editor Bliss realized that the bookkeeping system used by NAS headquarters did not furnish the necessary cost accounting data for the publication. Therefore, it was necessary to take time out to straighten up this matter. This has been done and the change will reflect itself in the future in providing more detailed information to all concerned on the publication of THE SANITARIAN.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing fiscal year:

President—Joseph S. Goldfarb, MD., RS., Massachusetts

(This was an automatic assumption of this position, inasmuch as Dr. Goldfarb was President-Elect during the past year)

President-Elect—E. Russell Jackson, RS, Florida

National Vice-President—Hayes Evans, RS, Washington State

National Treasurer—W. W. Kimsey, RS, California

Regional Vice-Presidents

Region No. 1—Vance Fleming, RS, California

(To fill the unexpired term of W. W. Kimsey who was elected Treasurer)

Region No. 3—Mrs. L. B. Ringold, RS, Iowa

Region No. 4—Nicholas Pohlit, RS, Colorado

Region No. 9—Robert E. Mytinger, RS, New York

Department of Registration, Member—Franklin Fiske, RS, Colorado

Executive Committee Members—Norman Hauret, RS, California;

T. Ross Williams, RS, California;

Lloyd Irons, RS, California

The Annual Educational Conference site for next year, selected last year at New Orleans, is Chicago. Bernard Kelly, RS, of Chicago, who is in charge of preparations, rendered a report which indicates that excellent progress has already been made and plans are all drawn up for a very successful Conference next year. The 1957 Conference will be held in Seattle, Washington, at which time it may be possible to get together with the Canadian Sanitarians on the matter of the possible creation of a World Federation of Sanitarians.