

THE PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU (*Continued*)

9th Conference.—It was a little over seven years after the 8th Conference met at Lima, Perú on October 12, 1927, that the 9th Pan American Sanitary Conference was held at Buenos Aires, Argentina, the sessions continuing from November 12th to 22nd, 1934. Dr. Gregorio Aráoz Alfaro was elected President and Drs. Alberto Zwanck and Alfredo Sordelli, Secretaries General. In addition, an English-speaking (from the United States) and a Portuguese-speaking (from Brazil) Secretary were elected.

All the 21 Republics were fully represented at the 9th Conference, there being 43 delegates present, nine of them from Argentina. There were four delegates from Chile and three each from the United States, Perú and Uruguay. Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic sent two each and the other countries were represented by one each. Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua, however, appointed as their representatives members of their Diplomatic missions. The Pan American Sanitary Bureau, the International Bureau of Public Health, the Health Organization of the League of Nations and the Rockefeller Foundation also sent representatives.

Among those present were several experts who had attended a number of similar meetings: Aráoz Alfaro, Sordelli, Cumming, Lloyd, Long, Núñez, González, Ramos, Gubetich, Paz Soldán. Health leaders appearing for the first time were Sussini of Argentina, Bejarano of Colombia, Suárez of Chile and Schiaffino of Uruguay.

During the plenary session special tributes were paid to Carlos Chagas and João Pedro Albuquerque of Brazil, and Mario G. Lebrado of Cuba, all of them eminent contributors to the cause of inter-American health.

A welcome and timesaving innovation was the decision to have only one delegate speak in the name of all the delegations at the Inaugural Session.

In part, Dr. Gregorio Aráoz Alfaro spoke as follows in his opening address:

In order to bring about the good results which we long for, we shall have to stop depending upon the gifts of nature and must learn to depend solely upon our own efforts. In combatting the tendency of the Latin Americans to depend too much upon the wealth of nature, many years ago our great thinker Alberdi expressed himself as follows: "South America bases all its pride and hopes of a great destiny on the fertility of its soil and on the mildness of its climate. That is a great mistake. Poor soil makes the man strong, because its poverty obliges him to depend upon his own efforts and labor." In America portentous events offer an example of what may be accomplished when, under competent technical leadership, all necessary resources are marshalled into the struggle against sickness and death. The health achievements secured in Cuba by the immortal Gorgas, after the American Commission, headed by Reed, had confirmed the theory of that great Cuban, Finlay, the work in Panamá done by Gorgas, and

that in Rio de Janeiro by the great Oswaldo Cruz, all bring honor to science and bear witness to the power of the Americans. They are also a model which all of us should ever bear in mind. The spirit of these great Americans, as well as that of their principal co-workers and emulators in other countries (Agramonte, Liceaga, Carlos Chagas, Coni, Penna), is with us at our meetings and inspires us in our work. The ideal of the great and noble Americanism which encouraged our liberators Bolívar, San Martín, and Sucre, and which later inspired Monroe, Henry Clay, James Blaine, Quintino Bocayuva, Mitre, Alberdi, Sarmiento, Ruy Barbosa and Rodó, also heartens and fortifies us in our endeavors. However, our Americanism certainly does not nourish hostility nor distrust against the Old World. On the contrary, the majority of our Latin American countries owe their scientific, literary and artistic culture to the European nations. In sanitary matters, we, the men of the whole world, strive together. Never before have we seen as today the advantages and importance of universal collaboration.

Dr. Solón Núñez, of Costa Rica, said in part:

However strong it may be, no Nation can isolate itself within its own individuality. Even though differing in detail, the road to be travelled is the same for all. It is the way that leads to the highest degree of social welfare within even the most absolute autonomy. Health is not only just a policy but it is also the most noble one. No Government could possibly view with indifference problems which are so vital to the country itself. It is at the pure fountain of health that man drinks his fill of self-confidence, his capacity to labor, his desire to serve, his devotion to his country, his infinite longing for peace and liberty.

In his address, which closed the series, Dr. Carlos Enrique Paz Soldán made the following statements:

The Pan American Sanitary Conferences may well be proud of having achieved success in their noble and fundamental endeavor. The adoption of the Pan American Sanitary Code as a substantial law of continental health is indisputable documentary evidence of assured success. Let us not forget that politics, intended as the rule of the people to guarantee peaceful living and make it possible to fulfill the happiness of each individual, is a question not only of laws but also of administration. If we really wish to bring about a Pan American sanitary policy, let us apply such principles and let us ask not only for such wise and comprehensive documents, as the above-mentioned Code, which are inspired by the most definite and modern technical conceptions and doctrines, but also an administrative organization of health matters capable of undertaking with full assurance and firm guarantees the realization of that which is prescribed as useful to the bio-social progress of the communities of the Continent. It is here that the health policy of the New World expects progress that will guarantee future victories against the disease and death which wage relentless war in the majority of our countries. It is a fine thing that the doctrines of health resulting from the able labors of many renowned experts of America who attend these Conferences may be reduced to precise texts, and be so highly coordinated that they may serve all the countries which make up the American continent. If our sincere purpose is to lay out a direct course for the good of health, however, let us not forget to indicate at the same time, by means of an administrative structure capable of lending full cooperation to such an important undertaking, how and by whom such plans of action must be carried out.

The 2nd Pan American Sanitary Conference of National Directors of Health had suggested that in addition to interpretation of such articles of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau as had given rise to reservations by various Governments, the following subjects should appear on the program: hospital care; health projects; venereal diseases; milk; vital statistics; tropical diseases; malaria; smallpox vaccination; plague; leprosy; school hygiene; rural sanitation; hookworm disease; eugenics; tuberculosis and especially anti-tuberculosis vaccination. The International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation adopted in Paris in 1933 came up also for consideration. The Organizing Committee added new material amplifying some subjects already suggested at the Conference of Directors of Health. The final program included, therefore, not less than 32 subjects: the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation; Pan American Sanitary Bureau; vital statistics; health organization and coordination; hospital care and coordination with health activities; tropical medicine institutions; yellow fever; malaria; hookworm disease; rural sanitation; leprosy; plague; typhus fever, undulant fever; smallpox vaccination; snake and spider bites; eugenics; infant mortality and child and maternal welfare; school hygiene; tuberculosis and especially anti-tuberculosis vaccination; venereal diseases; narcotics; alcoholism; nutrition; milk; water supplies and sewage disposal; health education and teaching of hygienics. Still other subjects were brought up on the floor, among them being *Anopheles gambiae*; physiology of life in high altitudes; post-vaccinal encephalitis; alastrim; venereal lymphogranulomatosis and Pharmacopœias.

A very complete set of rules for the government of the sessions was submitted by the Organizing Committee and adopted at the Conference. In addition to the usual Committee on Resolutions, Committees were appointed on the Pan American Sanitary Code and the International Sanitary Convention on Aerial Navigation; on tropical diseases; on yellow fever; on plague and on venereal diseases.

The very abundance of subjects prevented exhaustive consideration in a number of cases. A new matter which received much attention was nutrition. Most interesting discussions were raised by the accounts of jungle yellow fever and the invasion of Brazil by the *Anopheles gambiae*, which first focused attention on these two new problems.

General reports on health conditions in their respective countries were submitted by the delegates from Colombia, Cuba, Panamá, Paraguay, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela. The Pan American Sanitary Bureau continued the practice initiated at Lima of submitting a report on its activities.

Resolutions adopted dealt with: interpretation of Articles IX, XVI and XLIX of the Pan American Sanitary Conference in regard to re-

porting cases of disease by the different countries, obviating the necessity of sending telegraphic reports in certain cases; recommending that American governments ratify and adhere to the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation (1933) and the International Sanitary Convention of Paris (1926); improving reports of vital statistics; increasing public health appropriations; recommending the establishment of medical relief services; praising various American republics for recent valuable discoveries concerning typhus and allied conditions; coordination of sanitary activities; standards for Pan American scientific institutions; measures for control and eradication of yellow fever, malaria, plague, and other diseases; code on welfare and care of children; campaigns against tuberculosis, venereal diseases, narcotic addiction; safe milk; industrial hygiene; continuing studies of food and drug standards; and public health education.

An important achievement was the approval of the Constitution and Statutes governing the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, as drawn by the Directing Council in 1929. An important change gave a seat in the Directing Council to the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the next Conference.

At the closing session, Dr. Leopoldo Melo, Minister of the Interior of Argentina spoke as follows:

A deep and justified desire to know the results of investigations and experiments made at various and distant points on this Continent has given rise to increasing expectations from your brilliant deliberations. The subjects emphasized to insure better health conditions have been fully covered and brought up to date, from the standpoint of conclusions reached and the judgments and opinions expressed in the discussions have been coordinated and made concrete in the resolutions, which are truly commands for the communities and governments of America. During your first votes you established a principle which I consider to be of great importance to the efficiency of governmental action in regard to public health, that is, the necessity of uniting health and social welfare, both being coordinated under one technically competent head with executive ability, who can direct the campaign against sickness and death, organizing and grouping in a fair manner all activities of national and local official organizations, along with the private institutions or those which cooperate without governmental aid. This correlation of official and private endeavor is of utmost importance for the success of all social action which, even though having to depend on various sources for aid, requires that there be a mutual understanding and cooperation in order that the best results may be derived from expended efforts.

Bogotá, Colombia, was selected as the meeting place for the next Conference and Dr. Jorge Bejarano was elected Provisional President, it being tentatively agreed that the date might coincide with the Centennial of the foundation of Bogotá, if agreeable to the Government of Colombia.

When published in 1936, the printed proceedings made 431 pages.