

conference to deal with all the aspects of the food problem. I have attempted to set before our conference the more obvious and important objectives toward which we must apply our efforts. A new department of knowledge, the knowledge of the role of diet in relation to health, has come to stand abreast of the hitherto recognized public health problems such as the control of communicable diseases, improvements in sanitation and the control of epidemics. Already, through the widespread prevention of rickets and scurvy in infants, children, and the armed forces, and the reduction to a considerable degree in the incidence of beriberi and pellagra, outstanding achievements in the field of public health have been realized. There are still fields to conquer through the agency of foods. We have come together today to report new researches and to discuss several of the larger problems in nutrition in which we are mutually interested.

REPORT OF THE PAN AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON TYPHUS*

The Pan American Sanitary Bureau considering the public health importance of typhus and the other rickettsial diseases in the Americas because of their extensive distribution (the presence of typhus has been already proven in fourteen countries and various foreign possessions in the hemisphere) and its high incidence in certain regions; and in accordance with the resolutions of the Pan American Sanitary Conference in Rio, September 7-18, 1942, has organized the Pan American Committee on Typhus for the study of this disease and the other American rickettsial diseases.

In Rio de Janeiro studies of the disease were suggested also along the following lines:

1. To determine the various rickettsial diseases existing in each country.
2. To study the reservoirs and vectors of the rickettsias found in each country.
3. To present the conclusions of their work at succeeding conferences.
4. That the Health Authorities in the regions in which typhus is found and where there are Indian populations attempt to secure the cooperation of these populations through the activity of nuclei selected among the Indians themselves as the most direct and efficient means of lasting public health results.

The Pan American committee on Typhus plans to study:

The epidemiology of typhus and other rickettsial diseases found in the continent in order to determine the series of factors which make their existence possible in nature.

* Submitted by Dr. R. E. Dyer, Chairman of the Committee, to the Conference of National Directors of Health in Washington, D. C., on April 22-23, 1944.

The standardization of methods of study so that the results obtained in the different countries may be comparable with each other.

The search of more adequate methods of prevention and control of these diseases, including research into specific treatment and improvement of present therapy.

The development of this plan will comprise the study, as completely and exactly as possible, of the geographic distribution and incidence of rickettsias in the hemisphere, of the characteristics and variations which they present in regard to season, climate, altitude, epoch, that is to say, in successive years, age, sex, race, occupation, place of residence and all other epidemiological factors, such as the economic-social, of the affected population.

To this end is recommended the improvement or intensification, in accordance with the degree of development reached by typhus study in each country, of the notification of cases occurring in their respective territory, of the study of the characteristics of the affected regions, of the laboratory confirmation of clinical diagnosis, and of the type classification of rickettsiae.

It would be advisable to select, in the countries where it is possible to do so, certain regions as experimental areas for the more detailed and complete investigation of the population factors related to these diseases.

The plan also includes the study of a sufficient number of strains of rickettsias from each country in order to learn their distribution and promote research on the biology and antigen composition of rickettsias. It includes the determination, classification and biological study of the vectors and of the manner in which they transmit the diseases. It includes the determination, classification and biological study of the reservoirs of virus in nature and the study of parasitism or the relationship of the virus with the host.

The Committee considers it very advisable that each country undertake research to elucidate some of these points and that it establish or proceed to a continued and permanent study of rickettsias in their respective territories.

The following steps have been taken towards the execution of this plan:

Organization of the Pan-American Committee on Typhus with representatives of the twenty-one republics of the Americas and Canada,¹ and sending to each of the governments of these countries the plan of organization, a preliminary questionnaire and an invitation to appoint a representative at the Committee. Some countries have considered it unnecessary to be represented because rickettsias are not an important public health problem in their territory. Several countries have

¹ To date members have been appointed from the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela.

already filled in the questionnaire. The data furnished are being published in the Bulletin of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau.

During the meeting of the American Public Health Association in New York in October 1943, an informal reunion of some members of the Pan American Typhus Committee and the official delegations of certain countries interested in the public health problem of this disease took place and certain suggestions were made at the time for the standardization of the study of typhus and other rickettsias. These suggestions and the epidemiologic table prepared by the Pan American Sanitary Bureau for monthly reports on typhus and allied diseases were sent to all the members of the Committee so that they might comment on them and recommend the best methods for carrying them out. The Bureau is continuing the study of laboratory techniques which was also discussed at the New York meetings.

The Pan American Sanitary Bureau has initiated a study of the Cox and R. Castañeda vaccines under natural conditions and the study of a delousing campaign in a civilian population using one of the new insecticides. The Bureau has also cooperated with the health authorities of Colombia, Guatemala and El Salvador in the preparation of programs for the study and control of typhus in their territories and it has been studying the program of the Mexican Typhus Committee and exchanging ideas with its members. This program was discussed at the meeting in New York, and it was advised that the other countries should do something along similar lines.

In order to draw up complete programs on the points mentioned and to seek the most adequate procedures for carrying them out, the Pan American Sanitary Bureau plans to call together the members of the Pan American Committee on Typhus at the earliest opportunity.

The Pan American Sanitary Bureau through the Committee offers all the technical cooperation at its command and places at the disposition of the interested governments the consultative services of recognized authorities in this field when necessary, in connection with problems referring to the study, control and treatment of these diseases.

Alcoholismo y delincuencia.—Analizando las estadísticas de delincuencia en el Distrito Federal de México de 1927 a 1931 se encontraron 56,440 presuntos delincuentes de los cuales estaban ebrios 21% y 27% ignoraban si lo habían estado o no. Para 1942 los datos para el Distrito Federal son los siguientes: 2,640 reos sentenciados con 27% alcoholizados. Entre los delincuentes por lesiones, 43% estaban ebrios; entre los condenados por homicidio, 40% habían ingerido alcohol; de los sentenciados por delito de violación, 31% estaban ebrios; entre los de robo, 17% estaban alcoholizados. En el tribunal de menores de 1932 a 1938, de 13,409 sentenciados, el 58.76% tenían historia de padres alcohólicos o de taras hereditarias de otra naturaleza.—*Prev. Soc.*, 9, eno. fbno. 1944.