

paign against tuberculosis, and under the auspices of the Secretariat of Health and Welfare it has secured a considerable number of members and has been able to collect a large amount of money. This has been used to purchase equipment for the first tuberculosis hospital (100 beds), now almost completed.

Child and Maternal Welfare.—On January 5, 1941, the National Board of Maternal and Child Welfare, created by Law No. 367 of November 15, 1940, was inaugurated. Among its activities have been the installation of two milk stations, enlargement of the maternity ward of the Padre Billini Hospital to a capacity of 60 beds, construction of the Maternity Hospital of San Francisco de Macoris (30 beds), and enlargement of the Julia Molina Maternity Hospital (30 beds).

Children's Hospital.—The Ramfis Children's Hospital (150 beds) was inaugurated January 6, 1938 and is meeting a long-felt need, as the first children's hospital in the Republic.

HAITIAN EPIDEMICS

By Dr. RULX LÉON

Ex-Secretary of State in charge of the Public Health and Social Assistance Service

Several severe *smallpox* epidemics occurred in Haiti during early times, including those in 1518, 1738, 1740 and 1741. Treatment in 1518 consisted chiefly in having patients bathe in the river. But in 1825, when another outbreak appeared, soldiers were ordered to be vaccinated. In 1881-1882 and 1920 Haiti was again severely stricken but it was only in 1920 that the people began to take seriously vaccination and isolation as a means of combating the disease.

The first cases of *yellow fever*, imported from Martinique, were reported in Haiti in 1691. Epidemics occurred in 1733, 1735, 1739, 1743, 1745 and 1746. Very severe were those in 1798, 1802, 1803 and 1804, according to such writers as Poissonier Desperrières, Ch. F. Roux, Victor Bally, Delmas, Descourtiz, Louis Joumaron and François Moulié. No further epidemics of yellow fever occurred in Haiti, although a few sporadic cases were reported from time to time, confined to the white colony. Dr. Georges Smith, first President of the Board of Health, wrote in 1861 that during the 20 years of his practice in Haiti, he never had a fatal case of yellow fever in a negro or in anyone with African blood and that although such individuals contracted the disease, they usually recovered very quickly.

Epidemics of *malaria* and of *typhoid*, sometimes difficult to distinguish without laboratory aid, have also been reported in Haiti, in 1739, 1742, 1744 and 1766. The independence of Haiti brought about no noticeable change in this regard. In 1817 and 1818 there was much malaria, and it was especially severe at Port-au-Prince. Alexandre Pétiou, founder of the Haitian Republic and friend of Simon Bolivar, died during this epidemic.

Among the endemic diseases which often proved fatal may be mentioned *mumps*, very common in 1740, (Pouppée Désportes), and *measles*, prevalent in 1741 (Damien Chevallier) and 1889. There were many cases of rabies in both dogs and humans in 1762, 1768 and 1852. An influenza epidemic, with pulmonary complications, occurred in 1852. Three years ago Port-au-Prince had its second epidemic of diphtheria since 1892, and in 1935 anthrax made its first serious appearance since 1775.