

Preventive Medicine: New York City, 1943

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Director of the Division of School Hygiene, Health Department)

I HAVE just read a review of public health in New York City, 1943. It is interesting to see how that city guards its health. Syphilis and gonorrhoea have long been a health problem in New York. One of the valuable weapons in combating venereal disease is the city law requiring blood tests before marriage and before birth. Applicants for marriage licences found to have syphilis must secure medical treatment till cured, or rendered non-infectious, before they're allowed to marry. Syphilitic pregnant women, too, may secure proper medical treatment to safeguard their unborn infants. In addition to driving people to treatment and providing some free if necessary at clinics, New York takes long-term preventive measures against passing syphilis to the next generation. In our country we haven't been bold enough yet to require pre-marriage and pre-natal blood tests—which is a pity!

New York combats tuberculosis by case-finding activities, and, to this end, mass X-rays surveys have been used extensively. Half a million men, women and children have been X-rayed by the Health Department in the last 10 years. In every hundred 1.4 have had active tuberculosis. Proper treatment was arranged for these. The diagnosis of tuberculosis is offered free of cost to those who can't afford private physician's fees. Free examination, including chest X-rays, is obtainable at the Department's tuberculosis clinics. Approximately 89,000 such free examinations and X-rays were made at the clinics during 1943. Low cost or free hospitalisation or sanatorium care is provided as needed. In our country we also fight tuberculosis by case-finding, but are handicapped badly by the inability to carry out mass X-rays of susceptible groups of people.

Typhoid fever used to claim an average of 665 deaths annually in New York during the early years of this century. It caused six fatalities in 1943. Here's evidence of the successful use of preventive medicine—good food and water supplies, good sanitation, coupled with preventive inoculations at outbreaks. We can point to similar success against typhoid in our own country.

Diphtheria, alone, caused 1920 deaths in 1900 in New York. The Health Department in the 'twenties of this century campaigned for mass immunisation of New York children against diphtheria. The immunisation was offered to all infants and children and the immunising material given without charge to private doctors. Diphtheria immunisation is now accepted by the people of New York as a necessary procedure for their children. As a result, New York's diphtheria death rate has declined steadily till, in 1943, only 16 children in that city of 7,600,000 people died from that disease.

I have shown you how a big city controls venereal disease, tuberculosis, smallpox, typhoid fever and diphtheria, as examples of preventive medicine in practice. And you should see from it how, where people herd together in cities, an ounce of prevention bears dividends in pounds of cure.

MY TEETH SPARKLE

thanks to
COLGATE
RIBBON
DENTAL
CREAM

COLGATE RIBBON DENTAL CREAM cleans and polishes teeth without harm to delicate enamel or irritation to tender gums. And Colgate's *penetrating foam* gets into the crevices between your teeth and helps remove the decaying food particles that cause much bad breath! Start using Colgate Ribbon Dental Cream to-day and see how it leaves your teeth thoroughly clean and bright—the gums healthy and the breath sweet.

PLAY SAFE!

Twice a day ... and before
every date ... use

It cleans
your breath
while it cleans
your teeth



D/2.4

COLGATE-PALMOLIVE LTD. PETONE.

*The Essence
of Success!*

HANSELL'S
"CLOUDY
for strength" FOOD
FLAVOURINGS



Made by
Hansell
Laboratories Ltd.
Masterton.

"The Essence
Specialists of
New Zealand"