

No such mortality as this has ever before been recorded for any epidemic in this country since registration commenced, except in the case of the cholera epidemic in 1849, when the mortality from that cause rose to 3,033 per 1,000,000 population. None of the previous outbreaks of influenza can compare in mortality with that of 1918-19. During the 46 weeks, June 23-May 10, the total deaths allocated to the disease were 151,446, including 140,989 of civilians, the corresponding civilian death-rate for these 46 weeks being at the annual rate of 4,774 per 1,000,000 population.

It is pointed out that the mortality attributed to influenza does not represent the whole of that caused by it. The entries under other headings, especially those of respiratory disease, were always bound to increase during an epidemic, and though that did not occur in 1918 to the same extent as in other recent outbreaks, allowance must be made for these increases in mortality, allocated to other causes but really attributable to influenza, in endeavoring to measure the loss of life caused by the epidemic.

With regard to the deaths of females, when pneumonia, bronchitis, heart disease and phthisis are included, the deaths attributable to the epidemic during the third quarter of 1918 were 7,741, and during the fourth quarter 62,240. The figures for males for the same quarters were 8,088 and 51,359, respectively.

In earlier years influenza was less important under 55 years and more so above that period. In 1918-19 this position was suddenly and violently reversed. Those under 35 died in appalling number; those over 55 seemed to be relatively safe. The report says:

It may be doubted whether so sudden and so complete a change of incidence can be paralleled in the history of any other disease, yet all the weight of medical testimony goes to show that the influenza of 1918 was essentially the same as that of former years. Attempts have been made to explain the change as due to alteration in the circumstances of the population. Thus it has been suggested that aggregation of young women in munition works in 1918 may partly account for their specially heavy mortality. No simple explanation on these lines is possible. The alteration in age incidence accompanying the increased prevalence and fatality of the disease in 1918 seems to

be more easily explained by a sudden change in the infecting organism than in the soil provided for its growth.

THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE FOOD AND DRUG ACT¹

DURING the last few years the people of the United States have been given a very material amount of protection against those swindlers who sophisticate the foodstuffs and drug supplies of the country. Especially good work has been done in obtaining convictions against "patent medicine" fakers who have made false and fraudulent claims for their nostrums. This protection has been given through the enforcement of the federal Food and Drugs Act. The administration of this law rests with the Department of Agriculture, which acting through its Bureau of chemistry, collects evidence and lays the groundwork for the legal machinery of the government to proceed against the offender. The activity of the Bureau of Chemistry of the Department of Agriculture has, of course, aroused the strongest antagonism on the part of the nostrum interests. These interests may well rejoice in the recent action of congress in cutting down the appropriations for the Department of Agriculture. Even under the appropriation given for the last fiscal year, which ended June 30, 1920, the department was greatly hampered in its work of enforcing the Food and Drugs Act. Under the plea of economy, Congress has reduced the appropriation for the enforcement of this act by thirty thousand dollars. The *Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter*, a highgrade and conservative publication, well states the fact, in commenting on this disgraceful condition of affairs, when it says:

Under the reduced amount provided for next year, it will be impossible to supervise the regulation of the Food and Drugs Act as it should be supervised. This portends a rich harvest for those who misbrand and adulterate medicinal, pharmaceutical, disinfectant and other preparations. The vast public, which daily purchases and consumes

¹ From the *Journal* of the American Medical Association.

these products, will be the chief sufferer. At a time when the act requires enforcement of the most rigorous nature the Congress has succeeded in hamstringing it.

At a time, then, when in all lines of industry the spirit of exploitation is rife, Congress, under the specious plea of economy, practically nullifies the protective power of one of the most useful pieces of federal legislation ever enacted.

ALASKA SURVEYS AND INVESTIGATIONS IN 1920

UNDER the appropriation of \$75,000 made for the investigation of the mineral resources of Alaska, the Geological Survey has dispatched seven field parties. The work to be done is that of extending the surveys and investigations which were begun in 1898.

G. H. Canfield is continuing investigations of the water powers of southeastern Alaska in cooperation with the Forest Service. The water powers are important not only to mining but to the wood-pulp industry.

In July L. G. Westgate will make a geologic reconnaissance of the region adjacent to Hyder, on Portland Canal, where gold and silver bearing lodes have been found.

F. H. Moffit, geologist, with H. Insley as assistant and C. P. McKinley, topographic engineer, are making reconnaissance surveys on the west side of Cook Inlet between Iliamna Bay and Snug Harbor. Their special mission is to survey the Iniskin oil field.

J. R. Eakin is making topographic reconnaissance surveys in the headwater regions of Susitna River, in order to complete as soon as possible the mapping of the region tributary to the government railroad.

P. S. Smith is making a geologic reconnaissance of the placer districts tributary to Richardson, on Tanana River. This region has long been a producer of placer gold in a small way. Promising deposits of auriferous gravels have been reported in it during the last two years.

Alfred H. Brooks accompanied Secretary Payne to Alaska in July, the objective being the Alaska Railroad and the Matanuska coal

field. Later Mr. Brooks, in company with Arthur E. Wells, metallurgist of the Bureau of Mines, will visit some of the copper-bearing districts of the Pacific seaboard of Alaska.

G. C. Martin is on the way to McGrath, on Kuskokwim River, to investigate the mineral resources in that vicinity. This district produces considerable placer gold and contains some promising gold-bearing lodes.

The geologic and topographic reconnaissance surveys of Seward Peninsula were completed some years ago, but a detailed study of its mineral deposits must still be made, and this study has been assigned to S. H. Cathcart. Mr. Cathcart began work at Nome about July 1 and will continue until the end of the field season.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

At its commencement exercises Harvard University conferred its doctorate of laws on Professor Roscoe Pound, dean of the Harvard Law School, whom President Lowell characterized as "lawyer and botanist; judge, teacher and writer, protean in interest; vindicator of the expansive power of the common law, who has also taken all jurisprudence as his province and mastered it." In conferring degrees of doctor of science President Lowell said: "William Williams Keen: a surgical officer in the Civil War, the Spanish War and the World War—a man whose career in his profession has been one of long and ever rising distinction; the dean of American surgery." "Hermann Michael Biggs: Pathologist and physician; guardian of the public health; who, by his combat with tuberculosis in New York, has rescued countless lives."

COLONEL RICHARD P. STRONG, of Harvard University, chief medical director of the League of Red Cross Societies, has been elected to honorary membership in the Serbian Medical Society as an expression of admiration for his scientific achievements, and as a mark of appreciation for the great sympathy which he showed to the Serbian people.

DR. J. S. FLETT, F.R.S., at present assistant to the director in Scotland, has been appointed