Health Service

OF THE

Canadian Medical Association

Edited by

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GROWING PAINS

A large number of deaths and a great deal of chronic ill-health and incapacity are due to organic heart disease, which in turn, results, in a very large percentage of cases, from rheumatic fever in childhood.

Rheumatic fever is always a serious disease. In spite of its apparent mildness in children and the absence of the severe symptoms in cases, which occur in older persons, it may and frequently does result in damaged heart.

When a child becomes acutely ill with fever, and one joint after another becomes painful and tender, it is not difficult for parents to recognize the condition as being serious, and they do not hesitate to call their doctor.

Growing pains, however, are seldom taken seriously by parents. The very name given to them suggests that they occur as the result of growth which is not the case. Growth does not cause pain. Growing pains should not be taken lightly. They are perhaps the most common symptom of the mild form of rheumatic fever.

It does not follow that every child who complains of growing pains has rheumatic fever. These pains may be due to some unusual use of the muscles, such as occurs when the child starts skating or cycling. Ill-fitting shoes will cause pains in the legs, as will also hip-joint disease.

The growing pains of rheumatic fever vary in extent and severity; they may affect both arms and legs; they come on independently of exercise and exertion: they often keep the child awake for hours at night.

The reason why we wish to bring growing pains to the attention of parents is in order to inform them that they make a serious mistake in not paying attention to the recurring muscle pains popularly known as growing pains. All parents should understand that if such pains are overlooked and treatment neglected heart disease may result.

Growing pains, St. Vitus' Dance, tonsilitis and rheumatic heart disease often occur in the same child and may be regarded as symptoms of the same disease. Any one of them requires immediate care. Rest gives the heart the best chance, and rest in bed, for a long time, is often necessary.

Heart disease in adult life is a severe handicap. It is true that, if the manner of living is adjusted to the capacity of the injured organ, a useful life is generally possible. If, however, such a handicap is to be avoided and if the number of cases of heart disease is to be decreased it is necessary that preventive measures be taken early in life. One thing we can do to prevent heart disease is to pay attention to growing pains.

Questions concerning health, addressed to the Canadian Medical Association, 184 College Street, Toronto, will be answered personally by letter.

SWEET CLOVER AS MANURE

During recent years many farmers have been growing sweet clover in rotation with potatoes. A full crop of sweet clover plowed under may be worth as much as 25 or 30 tons of barnyard manure. Where farmers have plenty of maiure available it may not be desirable to grow sweet clover for the purpose of plowing it down, but if the manure supply is limited, it has been profitable to follow the above plan of action. The most essential precautions to be observed in growing sweet clover are to make sure that the soil is not acid, that it is well drained to prevent heaving and that the seed is inoculated.

Father's Day comes once a month when the bills arrive.

Government Should Give More For Co-operative Work

The agricultural estimates this year amount to $6,600,000, yet out of this vast sum only $8,600 is spent on the economic branch, which has as one of its activities assistance to co-operation. For too long the task of the Department of Agriculture has been to "make two blades of grass grow where one grew before." The farmer was told that all he needed to do was to produce quality products; but to-day, no matter what quality of product he produces, he is selling it for less than the cost of production The farmers sell, as unorganized individuals, to a highly organized world and they are getting badly smashed up in the process. The farmers' problem to-day is economic and the Department of Agriculture should do everything it can to assist co-operation. The major part of the expenditure should be made to assist the farmers in processing their products and marketing them in the most efficient way possible. Experts could be sent out to help farmers organize co-operative associations; to establish a system of cost accounting and to create a fund enabling co-operative organizations, that were well organized, to borrow money for long terms at low rate of interest.

The farmers' debts and interest are fixed in terms of dollars. He can only pay this debt through the sale of his commodities. At present price levels the burden of his debt, interest and taxes has been increased from two to three times. Prices of farm commodities must be raised or his debts reduced. The farmers' debts cannot be paid at the present price levels. If the government could be persuaded to put Canadian currency on a par with the British pound sterling, the price of Canadian farm products would be increased by twenty per cent. With commodities worth less in Canadian currency than they are in British currency, our farmers are losing money on every pound of beef, bacon, butter and cheese sold in Great Britain. A few months ago the House of Commons regarded such statements as these I have just made, as ridiculous. Little by little they are coming round to the idea. If the farmers of Ontario, together with the farmers of other Provinces, could persuade the Government to bring our currency to a parity with the pound sterling, they would be doing a great service, not only to themselves, but to Canada as a whole, for until the farmers have purchasing power, there will be no return to prosperity in this country.

The many committees set up to investigate this and that have arrived at the reporting stage. The special committee investigating the Civil Service Commission recommended that the three Commissioners, Roche, MacTavish and Treblay, be retired. Dr Roche, on account of his advanced age, the other two for no given reason. It has been evident to those who were following the work of the committee that the Government was out to "get" MacTavish and Tremblay, but by the evidence it would appear that these two Commissioners voted in some cases to appoint Civil Servants to positions, not because of their qualities, but because of their political affiliations.

A further recommendation of the committee dealt with postmasters in offices having a revenue of $3,000 and less. These are now to be patronage appointments. Until the present time, only offices with a revenue of less than $400 were exempt from appointment on the merit principle. A great many members in the House felt this was a backward step and when E. J. Garland moved an amendment to the Report bringing post offices under the administration of the Civil Service Act, he got considerable support from all sides of the House, 55 voting for his amendment, with 92 against it. The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition stood in their places and solemnly announced to their followers that they could vote on the merits of the question, i.e. that party lines need not be followed

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The row in the Canadian National Railways Committee is still on. Matters are not improved by the fact that Hanson, the Chairman, is one of the most bitter partisans in the House. So objectionable is his conduct that even E. C. Buchanan in an article to the Toronto Saturday Night said: "High Priest Hanson seemed at times to lose his head completely, and his treatment of National Railway officials and witnesses was of the kind generally thought to be exclusive to police officers administering the third degree. So insupportable was it that a fair-minded Liberal member as Major Power demanded that he leave the chair and place someone else in it for the protection of witnesses, while he was attempting to bully them. And this failing. Liberal members, with ample justification threatened to walk out of the Committee. One was surprised they did not. The effect of it all was to prejudice the case Mr. Hanson and his friends were endeavoring to establish, to create the impression of unfairness and ulterior motives."

Friends of public ownership have heavy hearts over the revelations made in the Committee. Undoubtedly extravagant expenditures had been countenanced by the president and directors of the Road and I think by the Minister of Railways as wel, but even at that, the Chairman did not help matters by bull-dozing the witnesses At the last sitting of the Committee for the week, the tables were turned; until now the Government had righteously been running evil to ground, but now the Prime Minister was on the stand explaining to the Committee how it was that, although he occupied a fifteen-room suite in the Chateau Laurier, the rental paid by him is only $400 a month. It seems that while the Prime Minister was at the Imperial Conference in 1930, alterations were made in the hotel which cost $110,743.94, in order to create the fifteen-room "vice-regal" suite now occupied by the Prime Minister. Before leaving Canada Mr. Bennett had made arrangements for the alterations, but when he found, while in London, that the cost would exceed the $50,000 stipulated by him, he cabled requesting that the work be not proceeded with. On his return, however, he found the remodelled suite ready and moved into it.

Sir Henry Thornton was present at the Committee meeting and took full responsibility for the transaction, saying that while Prime Ministed paid only $400 a month, he spent $20,000 a year in the hotel and, as such, was a valuable patron. In the year 1930 the Prime Minister paid a hotel bill of $11,943.67, Sir Henry said; in 1931, $19,938 and this year, so far, $8,236. A heated discussion followed. Ross Gray, M.P., asked the Prime Minister if, now that he knew at what cost to Canada the suite had been prepared for him, he would be prepared to make financial adjustment in view of the present state of the Canadian National. The Prime Minister is reported to have expressed surprise that a member of Parliament would ask such a question; he said that if the Hotel asked for more, he would consider their proposition and either pay or vacate.

—AGNES MACPHAIL.

House of Commons,
Saturday, May 14, 1932.

Russia is short of wheat and several cargoes have been sent from Canada to that country. There is plenty of wheat still in the grain elevators in this country which the owners will be glad to get rid of, but the present prices are not any too alluring.

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