

Island TB control program makes great strides in decade

During the past 60 years, progress in tuberculosis control on Prince Edward Island has been phenomenal.

According to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, the death rate from tuberculosis has been reduced from 60 to six per 100,000 population over the past 25 years.

However, reviewing first admissions to the sanatorium over the same period, it is noted with some concern that despite the low death rate, the number of new active cases discovered has not decreased nearly so rapidly (e.g. in 1941-65; in 1961-38).

As early as 1923, diagnostic clinics were conducted on Prince Edward Island by such eminent pioneers as Dr. Claire Brink also Dr. G. J. Wherrett, who has served as executive secretary of the Canadian Tuberculosis Association for the past years.

Because so many people were diagnosed as having tuberculosis in those days, it became apparent that treatment in the home was most inadequate; consequently, the provision of voluntary donors and such organizations as the Women's Institutes of Prince Edward Island constructed the provincial sanatorium, which opened its doors to 60 per cent, the most needy of the estimated 325 sufferers from tuberculosis in 1930, the first superintendent being the late Dr. P. A. Creelman.

CHIEF OPPONENTS

Ignorance and indifference were the chief opponents in the fight against tuberculosis in the 1930's. However, in the early 40's it dawned on the community that it had a duty to provide not only a Sanatorium but also to provide better facilities for diagnosis, prevention and rehabilitation.

According to the constitution of the P. E. I. Tuberculosis League, the object of this association is to prevent the spread of tuberculosis by educational work including the circulation of literature, the sponsoring of educational talks and the extension of diagnostic services for the early detection of the disease, tuberculosis.

In the early days, through necessity, stress was placed on the supervision of patients in their

homes by a full-time tuberculosis nurse employed by the league.

By 1945, a new wing was added to the Sanatorium to make the total bed space of 150 available, with the result that most contagious cases were hospitalized and greater attention was ten focused on health education, diagnosis and prevention.

EARLY DIAGNOSIS

At this juncture the P. E. I. Tuberculosis League turned their attention to "early diagnosis."

In 1945, it had been proven in other Canadian provinces that mass x-ray surveys of the so-

called healthy population gave a comparatively high yield of unknown tuberculosis in communities; consequently, initiated by the Gyro Club of Charlottetown, which at that time sponsored the league, a mobile chest x-ray unit was purchased by the P. E. I. Tuberculosis League, this unit has been functioning ever since with the result that in the interim 1945-61, 219,021 x-rays were taken and 314 unknown cases of tuberculosis have been discovered.

In 1961 a new x-ray unit was purchased by the League at a cost of \$10,000.

It is generally agreed that

each undiscovered or unknown case of active tuberculosis is most likely to spread their disease to at least five (5) others, therefore, we can presume that through the medium of the mobile unit that over 1,500 Islanders have been spared the frustrating emotional experience of being removed from their homes and families for several months to undergo treatment.

Unlike diphtheria, poliomyelitis and other infectious diseases, tuberculosis is notorious as a relapsing disease, indeed, it is now known that the discovery rate of active disease found among former patients, or

among people who have old healed scars in their lungs is 25 times greater than in the general population; consequently, eternal vigilance should be our watchword if we are to control this disease.

It is very difficult to educate the public to the fact that tuberculosis now effects mostly the very young and those of middle age and over; it is generally accepted that those over 40 years of age are immune, indeed the opposite is true. Glancing through the 90 admissions to the Sanatorium during 1961, it is noted that 60 per cent were

over 40 years of age. There are presently 11 old age pensioners under treatment at the Sanatorium.

The best method of emanating health education is to have people participate in a program. With this in mind voluntary workers in connection with the community-wide tuberculin and x-ray surveys, which have been conducted since 1956 were given short lectures on up-to-date trends in the disease and each were given pamphlets to distribute in the homes.

The pamphlets were provided by the league, in the vic-

inity of 2,000 voluntary workers have been involved during the past six years.

Publicity in connection with the annual Christmas Seal Sale Campaigns is considered to be of equal importance as the raising of funds. In addition, family physicians are supplied by the League with appropriate bulle-

tins on a monthly basis.

EQUIP SHOP

As for rehabilitation, the P. E. I. Tuberculosis League has been most generous in supplying outings for Sanatorium patients, they have equipped a carpenter shop and play room and donated equipment in the

school room as well as supplying wheel chairs and other aids for needy tuberculosis patients.

In the field of research two per cent of funds received through the sale of Christmas Seals each year is set aside for this purpose.

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The P.E.I. Tuberculosis League... MAKING PROGRESS THROUGH EDUCATION

From a meaningful fear of tuberculosis has grown one of culture's most remarkable institutions for good—the voluntary tuberculosis associations. For thirty years, the P.E.I. Tuberculosis League has inched its way with courageous valour towards its goal,—tuberculosis control.

Supported entirely by the sale of Christmas Seals, the League has maintained a Mobile Chest X-Ray Unit since 1945, this unit has taken 219,000 free x-rays and detected 314 unknown active cases, most of whom have been successfully treated before spreading the disease to many hundreds. Progress, of course, but still an incomplete victory.

A Special Message of Thanks:

It gives me great pleasure to extend my sincere appreciation to the many contributors to the Annual Christmas Seal Campaign, who, through the years, have supported the P.E.I. Tuberculosis League, with the result that the League has been able to accelerate its programme in case-finding; health education and rehabilitation.

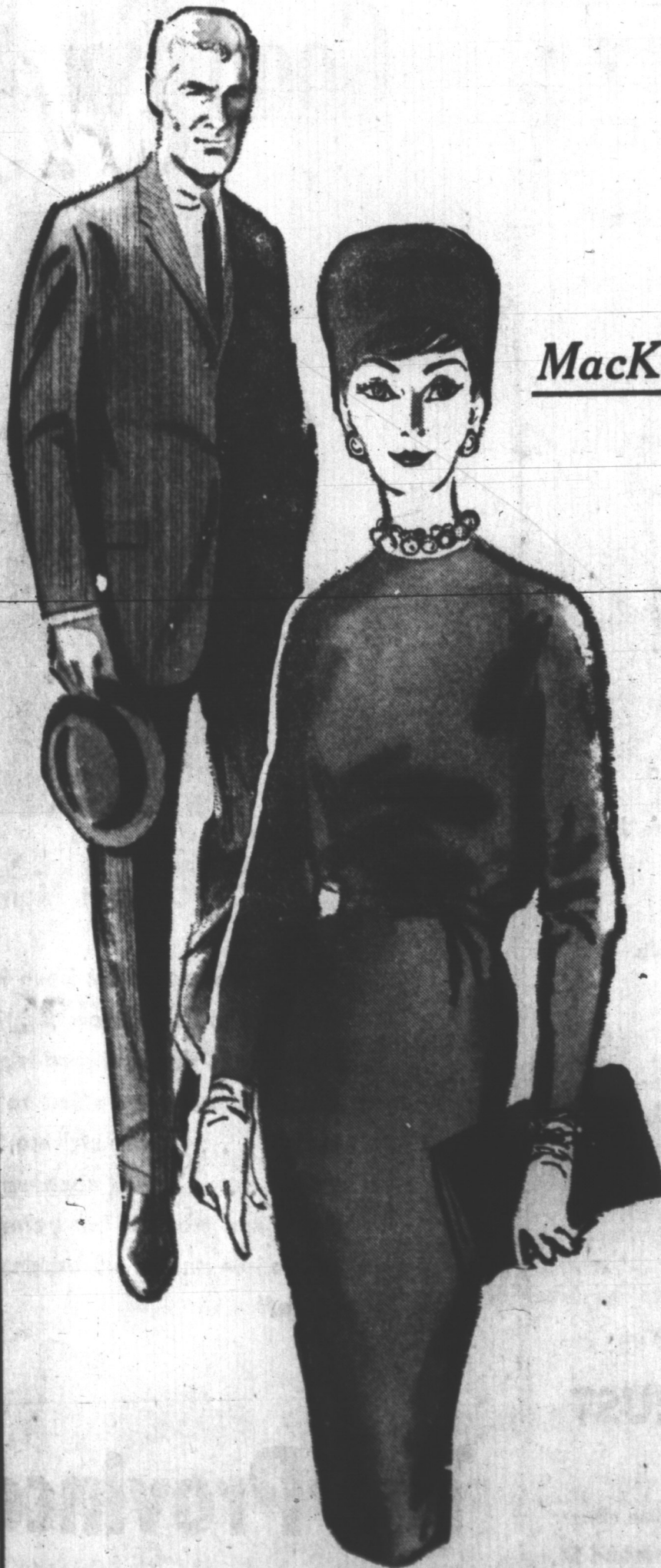
Signed:—

H. T. Holman

President

P.E.I. Tuberculosis League

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