

# RETIREMENT ACT IS EXPLAINED AT TEACHERS MEETING

## County Health Officer Addresses Teachers, Too

At the county-wide teachers meeting at Halifax recently, Baxter Durham, secretary of the teachers' retirement commission, explained provisions of the act which will provide funds for taking care of school teachers after years of service.

Miss Julia Weatherington of the State Department of Education, Raleigh, was another speaker at the meeting, and County Superintendent of Schools V. C. Matthews outlined plans for the year's work in Halifax schools.

Dr. Robert F. Young, county health officer, addressed the teachers on "A Way To Live More Abundant"

"You as teachers are about to embark on one of the most critically important years in your lives", the health officer told the group.

"The responsibility will be great. The future will be uncertain. This will be a year of momentous changes in the world at large that will affect each of you very definitely.

"In order for you to meet with courage and strength, therefore, whatever changes or vicissitudes that might take place you must provide yourselves and your students with health and knowledge in abundance.

"For the years that lie ahead", Dr. Young continued, "the children of today will need to develop broad shoulders, sturdy bodies and clean minds in order to preserve and perpetuate the heritage which is ours in America.

"When the going is bad and when times seem difficult, yours will be the task to boost the morale and spirit of the citizens of your community who are the parents of your students, for children are definitely affected by what goes on at home. Therefore, you should promote parent education as never before.

"There are many child health problems with which you have to cope during the school year, but I will discuss only those which are most important; such as, typhoid fever, childhood communicable diseases, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, and nutrition.

"We haven't had so much to say about typhoid fever in our school-health program, but today I want to lay a problem at your very door", said Dr. Young.

"During the past summer we have had four cases of typhoid fever in Halifax County, all of whom were colored patients. Not a single one of these patients had been vaccinated against typhoid fever although the Health Department had held clinics within a stone's throw of all these cases. Why did these colored patients fail to be vaccinated? They failed because of pure, unadulterated indifference and they have all paid most dearly, I assure you, for this indifference. One of the patients is still critically ill, trying desperately to keep soul and body intact. I pray that God will restore him to health even though his parents utterly ignored the advances of medical science which would have spared this poor child the pain and suffering he has had to endure. I really and truly believe that vaccinations are a part of God's Plan of things. He put them here for a purpose.

"As Johnson wrote, 'To preserve health is a moral and religious duty, for health is the basis of all social virtues. We can no longer be useful when not well'.

"I beg of you, therefore, to go back to your communities and your schools and teach the parents and children that typhoid fever is a disgrace to a civilized world and that it can be prevented by these vaccinations.

"Although all four of these cases of typhoid fever were colored pa-

tients living near Scotland Neck, it is just as much your duty as the duty of the colored teachers to go back to your communities, especially those of you who teach at Scotland Neck and Hobgood, and lead your people out of the dark ages of superstition into the world of present day medical and public health advantages. Typhoid fever is a 'must go' disease which still tenaciously hangs on when it should be merely a disease of historical importance.

### Childhood Diseases

"The communicable diseases of childhood we always have with us. Some of these maladies are as sneaking and insidious as fifth columnists'. Whooping cough is notably such a disease. So many of the childhood diseases are infectious even days before the signs and symptoms make the disease known, and by this time, of course, already the germs are incubating in other little bodies waiting to claim new victims; however, we can be on the alert for the first symptom or sign that does appear and make certain that control measures are carried out as soon as possible.

"The first of these childhood diseases that usually makes its appearance during the school year is diphtheria; it begins in September.

"This is another disease which can be prevented by proper immunization at an early age, preferably at six months of age, since it is during the first year of life that diphtheria claims most of its victims. Every child must be immunized against diphtheria before it can be admitted to school in North Carolina. We ask you to see that this regulation is carried out in Halifax County. We want every principal to advise the Health Department within the first week of school as to the number of first grade children that need to be immunized against diphtheria and smallpox. These immunizations, as you know, should be given at the pre-school clinics in order for the children to have their maximum protection by the time school starts; however, there is always a goodly number who miss these clinics and have to be vaccinated when school opens each fall.

"Diphtheria usually comes on at night. The child has symptoms that resemble a common cold. There is a greyish white, tenacious membrane that covers the entire throat. This membrane differs from exudates in that it leaves bleeding points on the throat or tonsils when it is removed.

"Diphtheria is an emergency and requires heroic treatment to prevent the child from being choked to death by this deadly membrane. Then, too, the germ gives off a toxin that poisons the entire system. There were three deaths from diphtheria in Halifax County last year.

"A child must have two successive negative cultures from its throat and nose to be released from isolation. All susceptible contacts must be quarantined who live in the house with a case of diphtheria for the duration of the incubation period.

"Insist that the message gets back home that all babies are required by law to be immunized against diphtheria as soon as they become six months of age.

"Scarlet fever, a violent childhood disease, comes in the wake of diphtheria and so many times children have the two diseases concurrently.

"There is no satisfactory immunization for scarlet fever at the present time.

"The patient has a profuse blush over his entire body. The rash is at first fine and granular. There is a short incubation period of three to five days, and the disease strikes suddenly with a high temperature, vomiting, and severe headache. The throat is usually extremely red and sore.

"The patient must be isolated for three weeks following the disap-

pearance of rash and cessation of all discharges. All susceptible contacts must be quarantined through the incubation period dated from the last exposure.

"The complications of scarlet fever are principally bronchopneumonia and otitis media (middle ear infection), and these complications are quite frequent and all too often fatal.

"Any child with a sudden onset of severe symptoms resembling scarlet fever should be sent home immediately. Please advise that a physician be summoned and that the Health Department be notified.

### Whooping Cough

"Now comes whooping cough. This disease is truly a 'sneak'. It is usually present for two weeks before the diagnosis is made by the characteristic 'whoop'. By this time enough susceptible children have been exposed in the school room and on the buses to initiate a sizable epidemic.

"There is a very good vaccine for whooping cough now. It does not always prevent the disease, but it does make the condition milder and prevents in most instances the complications.

"The vaccine is too expensive to be furnished free but can be obtained through the Health Department for fifty cents an immunization. Every baby should be immunized against this disease by the time it is four or five months of age.

"Whooping cough kills more children under five years of age than any other childhood disease. The infant is born with absolutely no protection against whooping cough, whereas with the other communicable diseases, it usually has enough protection to last until it is five or six months of age.

"The patient with whooping cough is isolated for three weeks following the appearance of the whoop. All susceptible contacts are quarantined for two weeks following the last exposure.

"Please warn all parents that this disease is deadly and that they should have all manner of respect

for its presence until the last vestige of illness is gone. There were four deaths from whooping cough in our county during 1940.

"There is another disease that attacked our children last year with the fury of a tornado. Hundreds of cases appeared almost over night to virtually paralyze our entire school system. Here again is a 'sneak'. It steals in under the guise of a common cold, when suddenly its true nature reveals itself with splotches of red over the entire body, resembling Uncle Wiggly after he had run through the red-berry bush.

"You well remember the brassy coughs that plagued these youngsters last year long after the measles epidemic had passed on.

"Any child with watery red eyes and who complains of light hurting his eyes should be sent home immediately and kept there until measles has been ruled in or out.

"All contacts may continue coming to school for one week following the date of the last exposure and then kept at home for a full week. If there is any question about the date of the last exposure all contacts must be kept at home for two full weeks.

"A most important point to remember about all childhood diseases is that children under five years of age must be protected against these diseases with all diligence. Children under two years of age, particularly are vulnerable to these diseases and must be kept away from older children who have whooping cough and diphtheria. These two diseases are the killers, but they can be 'brought to justice' by parents who are better informed in preventive medicine.

### TUBERCULOSIS

"As we leave the lower grades and approach high school, the disease that takes more lives than any other is tuberculosis. Early diagnosis and early treatment are essential in controlling this disease.

"What you as educators must do, therefore, is to create a desire on the part of the high school students to assume the responsibility

they should have in informing themselves on the symptoms and signs of tuberculosis. Teach them the value of periodic physical examinations.

"Two more diseases that begin to play a part in the drama of life as we approach high school are the venereal diseases, syphilis and gonorrhoea.

"Very little has been said about these diseases in the past in our schools, but more must be said in the future.

"These diseases stand as very definite menaces to the future of young people. Boys and girls are left to learn about syphilis and gonorrhoea themselves. They need to be guided and taught the truth before they leave high school. Here the Health Department must carry the brunt of the attack at least for the time being, and we would like to have an opportunity to talk to the high school students on this subject this year.

"Last but not least we come to nutrition. This problem is a monster in some sections of our county, but on close study, we in the Health Department have found that this giant can be slain.

"We need gardens and more gardens. It doesn't take a large plot to supply an average size family with the vegetables they should have. A small area will suffice.

"Every family should have plenty of collards set out and turnips and mustard planted now, but unfortunately this is not the case. There is desperate need for education here. Won't you teachers try to lead a movement this year for planting more gardens, for canning projects, and for buying more milk cows?

"Every school should put forth a mighty effort to get hot lunches, for this hot food during the school day puts color in the cheeks and sparkle in the eyes of our children. It helps to build sound bodies and reminds us that "He who has health has hope, and he who has hope has everything".



CONGRATULATIONS

To

THE JEWEL BOX

AND BEST WISHES

YOU SO WELL DESERVE

HAROLD N. HARRIS, INC.

MANUFACTURERS OF GUARANTEED DIAMOND RINGS

580 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK, N. Y.