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WALTER M. DICKIE, M.D., Director

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EDITOR

Migration and Communicable Diseases

From the beginning of time migration of human beings has been associated with the transmission of communicable diseases. The fall of Rome has been attributed to the introduction of malaria into the empire through the migration of soldiers. War has been particularly productive of disastrous epidemics of diseases made intensive through mass migrations. The pandemic of influenza of 1918-1919 illustrates the terrific damage that may be executed by a world-wide epidemic made virulent through mass movements of human beings.

Migration of white people to California began about 1820 and there are records of mysterious epidemics among the native Indian population following the arrival of white men. California was one of the most isolated spots on the globe prior to the establishment of the missions by the Spanish padres. Records of some of the missions portray the extent of epidemics of respiratory as well as intestinal diseases among the neophytes. In the "days of '49," in 1850, when the gold rush was at its height, typhoid fever, Asiatic cholera and dysentery were the most common of the communicable diseases.

It was not until 1855, when the first railroad in California was built between Sacramento and Folsom, that laborers were imported from Italy. Malaria had been brought from other states to California before the arrival of these Italians, but it would seem certain that they brought a particularly viru-

lent form of malaria into California from their native Italy.

In 1861, when the transcontinental railroad was under construction, 6000 Chinese were imported to work upon this railroad line. This started a general migration of Chinese into the United States and, during the 10 years ending in 1871, no less than 45,000 Chinese laborers came into California. The migration of Japanese laborers began in 1890 and by 1904 they had penetrated into every part of the state. During the eight years between 1900 and 1908 no less than 136,541 Japanese laborers entered California. This migration was curbed by the Exclusion Act of 1924, just as the Chinese migration had been curbed by the Exclusion Act of 1882.

Colonies of Spanish and Portuguese, consisting mostly of agricultural laborers, were established intermittently during the early part of the present century. Cornishmen migrated to the gold mines of Nevada County and Latin races later constituted the principal races employed in the Mother Lode gold mines. In 1915 the percentage of Italians, Spanish and Portuguese in California labor camps was almost 16, while in 1934 only 3.2 per cent of the total consisted of laborers of these races.

Mexican labor and the problems attendant upon it constitute an important subject in considering migratory labor in California. About 1909 Mexican laborers were brought into California by the railroads and

mines. They were paid \$1 a day for their work as compared with \$1.25 to \$1.50 that had been paid before their arrival. As early as 1907 records show that these migratory Mexicans became public charges. The Mexicans at that time constituted only about one-twentieth of the population of Los Angeles but one-third of the persons assisted were Mexicans. The increase in migration among Mexicans was rapid as is shown in the following tabulation:

Numbers of Mexicans in California

1890-----	7,164
1920-----	88,771
From government reports; does not show illegal entry.	
1930-----	368,013
(Census) 6.5 per cent of total popu- lation.	

When the recent depression appeared Mexicans began to drift back to Mexico in large numbers and at the present time the migration is not as extensive as it was in the prosperity era of the late 1920's. In 1928 Mexicans constituted 75 per cent of farm operators in Imperial County, chiefly in the Coachilla Valley, 84 per cent of farm operators in the rest of southern California and 56 per cent of those in San Joaquin County.

Migration of Hindus was never extensive. Probably 3000 was the maximum and these people were excluded by the Exclusion Act of 1917. Filipinos first began to arrive in numbers in 1923, increasing steadily until 1930, when there were 30,470 in California. Since 1930 large numbers of them have been returned to the Philippine Islands upon army transports. Most of the Filipinos that come to the United States are young, 84 per cent of them being less than 30 years old. Ninety-three per cent of them are males and 77 per cent are single.

Most of these different nationalities have brought communicable diseases with them into the state or have lacked resistance to infections that might be encountered in this country. Tuberculosis has always been particularly prevalent among the Cornishmen in the deep gold mines. The Portuguese miners and agricultural workers have suffered considerably from hookworm, but the disease disappeared from the state following the introduction of control measures and cessation of Portuguese migration. Mexicans have little or no resistance to tuberculosis. The type of peon that comes to California, in his native land, possesses a shirt and a pair of pants and is content to live under the shade of a convenient tree. When he comes into contact with modern civilization, crowded into the cheap lodging houses and living an indoor life, he contracts tuberculosis readily and does

not possess the necessary resistance to combat it successfully. Syphilis is also more prevalent among Mexicans than among many other foreign-born races. Filipinos have brought serious epidemics of epidemic meningitis into California and at one time the control of this disease among Filipinos in the lettuce fields and in their cheap lodging houses in the metropolitan areas constituted a serious problem.

Since 1929 a new problem in migratory labor has arisen in California. While the migration to California of the white race has been steady for more than eighty years there has never until recently been a mass movement of under-privileged white individuals into the state. Since 1930 there has been an extensive movement of poor whites from the south-central and southern states to California. This movement began with the depression and flared extensively following the drought years in the Middle West from 1933 to 1935. Once started, it assumed greater magnitude each year until, with the increased acreage devoted to harvestable crops, still greater numbers have come into the state during the past two years. During the two and one-half years ending in 1937, 221,000 of these laborers entered California by automobile.

Under the application of modern public health procedures, however, communicable diseases among these migrants have been kept under control. In spite of their malnutrition, due to the long use of faulty diets, tuberculosis is no more of a problem than it is among local residents. By means of immunization neither diphtheria nor smallpox has developed into an important epidemic and typhoid fever has been kept in check. This record is unique in the annals of migration.

EPIDEMIC POLIOMYELITIS IN 1937

A statistical analysis of poliomyelitis in California, last year, reveals the following data:

(1) A total of 663 cases was reported during the year 1937, of which number 72.0 per cent (477 cases) were paralytic and 25.8 per cent (171 cases) were nonparalytic. The type is unknown in 15 reported cases.

(2) In certain counties of the San Joaquin Valley the proportion of paralytic cases was lower than for the state as a whole. This is noticeable in Kern, Tulare, Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties.

(3) Almost two-thirds of all cases reported, 423, occurred during the months of July, August and September. The greatest number reported during a single month was 157 in August.

(4) Cases were reported in every county of the state except Alpine, Del Norte, Lake, Lassen, Mari-
posa, Mono, San Benito, Sierra and Tuolumne.