

PORTO RICO ISSUES NEW HEALTH BULLETIN

The following is a copy of the *Health News* sheet issued recently by the United States Public Health Service:

The Department of Health of Porto Rico has just announced the establishment of a monthly periodical known as the PORTO RICO HEALTH REVIEW. The first issue contains articles describing the work of the Department in combating hook-worm, tuberculosis, plague and venereal diseases. The Bureau of Venereal Disease Control was organized within the last year but considerable progress has been made. The Bureau confined its attention chiefly to syphilis, of which the journal speaks as follows:

"Although we have no exact knowledge of how much syphilis there really is in Porto Rico—we feel sure that it ranks high, if not the highest among the causes of death. The advanced symptoms of this disease are classified by the general terms of apoplexy, Brights' disease, aortic insufficiency, stenosis, etc. . . ."

"At the prenatal clinics we daily find an alarming proportion of syphilitic mothers. . . . It is not surprising that we still have an infant mortality of 128 per thousand, or 25 per cent of all deaths. Statistics show that at least 75 per cent of syphilitic children die under the first year of age."

"Syphilis is a problem of public health rather than a matter of morals; it is much more controllable than tuberculosis . . . and inasmuch as its removal from the Island will rid us of this plague, all efforts and expenses for such a noble end are justified."

It is of interest to note in the above statements, reference to the marked role which syphilis plays in morbidity and mortality. Professor Levaditi of the Pasteur Institute, Paris, in a recent lecture emphasized this fact. In this lecture which is reprinted in *Social Pathology*, a periodical issued by the Division of Venereal Diseases, United States Public Health Service, he agrees with numerous other syphilographers that in France many deaths attributed to broncho-pneumonia, gastro-enteritis, convulsions, congenital debility, "sudden death", etc., are really due to congenital syphilis.

