The first in a series of five historical articles to commemorate 100 years of CJPH.

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The Birth of a Journal: The *Canadian Journal of Public Health* at the Beginning of the XXth Century

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From the perspective of our 21st century world of prodigious journal publications and scientific communication, the birth of yet another journal merits little attention. Not so one hundred years ago when the publication of a professional journal was the essential public statement of the profession's status and authority. The founding of *The Canadian Journal of Public Health* (CJPH) in early 1910 and the formation of the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) later that year demonstrate the extent to which a journal was seen as a critical tool in promoting a shared sense of professional identity and endeavour. Indeed, by reading the early issues of the journal, one can see how it was a critical part of the movement to promote public health in Canada by uniting the various practitioners involved through a shared association, annual meetings and a monthly publication. The foundation laid almost one hundred years ago has endured to today.

The first decades of the 20th century were an exciting period for the growth of public health in North America. Institutions were developing training programs in hygiene and public health. In Montreal, a Chair of Hygiene was established in 1902 at McGill University and a School of Hygiene, l'École d'Hygiène Sociale Appliquée de l'Université de Montréal, in 1925. The University of Toronto officially opened its School of Hygiene in 1927. To the south, in 1910, Abraham Flexner's monumental report on medical education in the United States and Canada was released with its focus on a physician as "social instrument".¹ Training and academic research were married to front-line health care delivery with the Rockefeller Foundation's underwriting of public health, medical research and education in North America and Europe.

In January 1910, Drs. Duncan MacKenzie Anderson (1876-1956) and Lester McDonnell Coulter (1875-1956) started *The Canadian Therapist and Sanitary Engineer*, the original title of the CJPH. Both were graduates of the Trinity Medical School, Toronto, and both worked as doctors on public health front lines. Dr. Anderson began his public health career in style! He served as medical officer aboard the Empress of India, sailing between Vancouver and Hong Kong for several years. He later left this post to set up a private general practice in Toronto. Dr. Coulter, of whom less is known, took up private practice after graduation, but left Ontario in 1917 to serve as health officer in Watertown, New York and Stanislaus County, California. Both Anderson and Coulter saw military service. Anderson served with a Canadian infantry regiment in the latter part of the South African War, 1899-1902, while Coulter served with the United States Army Medical Division (USAMD) during the First World War, 1914-1918.²

Their journal's aim, reflected in its title, sought to provide a medium of communication between the silos of medicine and engineering, individual and civil public health. The editors were

committed to the development of sanitary hygiene and to bringing together doctors and engineers to address the pressing practical public health challenges of their time: 'sewage disposal, water purification and destruction of garbage'.³ Publishing monthly from a Toronto office, they invited submissions from leading health professionals, paid for the journal mostly through advertisements, and managed to publish eight monthly issues in 1910 under the original title. Income did not meet costs, however, so the editors partially financed the journal from private funds "given through a patriotic sense of duty."⁴

What can we discern of the contemporary public health issues based on the early numbers of the journal? A look inside the June 1910 issue (Vol. 1, No. 6) provides one example. Articles in this issue reflected the editors' concern with sanitary engineering, covering topics such as municipal hygiene and disposal of household waste. Also, about half the articles were signed, while the others appear to have been authored by the two editors themselves. Their editorials adopted a 'preacher' tone, which is perhaps not surprising for a period that considered public health part of the mission of science. In this issue, they warned their readers of the necessity to screen against 'Musca Domestica' as the housefly 'carries death on his wings.' They continued: 'He alighteth on the dung heap and the swill barrel, on the sputa of tuberculosis and excreta of the fevered. He visiteth the lazaretto and beareth away a billion wolves of the microscopic world to feast upon the vitals of his friends. Be not his friend.'⁵ Another refers to the 'regrettable retirement' of Dr. Charles Sheard as Director of the Toronto Health Department. Stating that 'an efficient modern health officer is both a scientist and a philosopher,' we have an insight into what qualities a public health professional was expected to emulate. 'He is the sociological element from which the afferent and efferent nerves of a community spring....The efficient health officer deals in sanitary matters with the individuals and the community in their inter-relations.'⁵

A milestone in the CJPH's history was reached in September, 1910 when the journal became the official organ of the newly founded Canadian Public Health Association. Issue number 9 bore the new title of *The Public Health Journal of Canada (incorporating The Canadian Therapist and Sanitary Engineer)*.⁶ In Ottawa that month, a meeting of 15 doctors and Sir James Grant established the framework for a pan-Canadian professional health practitioners association. Present were representatives from all provinces. They appointed Dr. Peter H. Bryce as Chair and Dr. Charles A. Hodgetts as Secretary.⁷ The formation of the CPHA can be considered as

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an extension of the work of Dr. Anderson, Dr. Coulter and others to promote public health awareness and professional communication and education in Canada, the same goals which had earlier led to the foundation of *The Canadian Therapist*. There were other links between the two endeavours. First, Dr. Anderson, the journal co-editor, presented the 'outline for the scheme' for the Association itself at the Ottawa meeting.⁸ Second, there was the clear desire to reach out and open membership to all professionals whose work related to health in the medical and within the sanitation, hygiene and engineering framework. While leadership remained with member doctors, the CPHA Board advocated broad inclusion. To facilitate this representation, all health professions were invited and encouraged to join the Association at its first Conference, held in Montréal, 13 December 1911. Included in the call for membership were sanitary engineers, nurses, health inspectors, architects, engineers, social workers and doctors.⁹

The founding meeting also unanimously appointed its first President, Professor Thomas Albert Starkey, MD, DPH, FRSI (1870-1939). Dr. Starkey earned public health front-line credentials early in his career. Working in India in 1897-98, he held a research appointment with the prestigious Haffkine Laboratories in Bombay. His background in bacteriology and interest in applied public health measures found him cleaning contaminated wells and reservoirs, organizing water-cart transport to villages situated downstream from contaminated areas of the Ganges River.¹⁰ In 1902 he took up the Chair of Hygiene at McGill University, Montreal. Dr. Starkey, as Professor of Hygiene and member of the Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Engineering at McGill, represented the interdisciplinarity that would characterize the CPHA at its inception and throughout its 100-year history.

The interests of the CPHA, as recorded in its journal, were broad; from hygiene and treatment to '...the development of the science and art of general prophylaxis with promotion of social welfare, in judicious conservation of natural resources, popularization of eugenics and more effective national and international co-

operation along all lines of public health.'¹¹ With representation from all provinces on the organizing committee, the new Association sought to place itself in the international as well as the national arena of public health. As the CPHA developed, its journal quickly looked more and more like other scholarly serials and less like the idiosyncratic, preachy and personal vehicle of its pair of initial editors. Nonetheless, it was the passion and dedication of people like Drs. Anderson and Coulter that initiated and sustained great and small works in public health in Canada, not least of which were the Canadian Public Health Association and its journal, whose upcoming centenary we are pleased to be celebrating.

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