

### Annotations.

#### THE APPALLING CONDITION OF INDIA.

The heartrending condition of certain districts in India owing to cholera and small-pox has received very scant attention, owing, probably, to the fact that the sympathies of the nation are largely concentrated on South Africa, where so many have near and dear relatives engaged in the war. But, although the war makes so large a claim upon us, we must not forget our Imperial obligations, and our duty to India in its time of need. It is something of a reproach to us that it has been left to an American, Dr. Kloptsch, administrator of the fund raised in New York for the relief of distress in India, to reveal the full horrors of the situation. Mr. W. Redmond last week asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been called to Dr. Kloptsch's report, and whether he had any information to the effect that vultures, dogs, and jackals had been found devouring human bodies left unburied, and whether the Government would recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the best method of dealing with the state of affairs now existing in Her Majesty's Indian Empire.

Lord George Hamilton admitted having read the statements of Dr. Kloptsch; he also said that he had read similar statements in one or two of the reports which had reached him. They only applied to districts limited in number where cholera and small-pox had attacked the famine camps, forming a combination which temporarily baffled administrative palliation. He did not propose to advise the appointment of a Royal Commission, though when the present epidemics are over it might be well to utilize the experience gained by making it the subject of further reports. This may be all that is desirable to the official mind, to which reports which can be duly docketed and pigeon-holed are dear. The practical person would prefer that immediate measures should be taken to remedy the terrible conditions described by Dr. Kloptsch. It surely behoves the Secretary of State for India to make some more sensible suggestion than that of the publication of a report years hence. If he is unable to do so we would suggest that the search light of public opinion should be turned upon the India Office, as it has of late been turned upon the War Office, when we

hope that it would be borne in upon this department that action, and not futile suggestions, are demanded of it.

#### THE NATION'S GRATITUDE.

The report of the War Relief Funds Committee, the substance of which has already been published, was officially issued last week as a Parliamentary paper. The recommendations are that relief should in all cases be administered locally through committees on the spot; that such committees should include nominees of the central as well as the local funds; and that representatives of the principal local and central funds should be called together in London for the purpose of forming a consultative council, which should provide for the formation of local committees, and carry into effect the conclusion at which the committee has arrived. The sooner such local committees are formed the better, we shall then, we may hope, not see such headlines in our papers as "From Modder River to Workhouse Infirmary," but the Lambeth Guardians had actually to deal with a case of this nature recently. A Private of the Wiltshire Regiment wounded at Modder River, was sent home and nursed at the Herbert Hospital from which institution he was discharged because "the authorities wanted more room," and, after staying with some friends at Lambeth, was eventually compelled to apply for admission to the Lambeth Infirmary. If the War Office is unable to prevent such scandals we hope some more competent authority will take these cases in hand.

#### PALM OIL.

There is a somewhat sinister significance in the fact that St. Pancras Parish has 1,600 lunacy cases, while Islington, a larger parish, has only slightly over 1,000, when we learn that the relieving officers of St. Pancras have been severely censured by the Chairman of the Relief Committee of the Board of Guardians for receiving bribes in connection with the certification and admission of lunatics. It is asserted that doctors who refused to give "presents" were boycotted by the incriminated officers. The Chairman in censuring them said that their public career was in danger of being wrecked. We shall await with interest the action of the Local Government Board with regard to this matter.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)