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Editorial.

The Continued Importance of an Infectious Hospital Service.

OVER THE YEARS the visitation to this country of the dread disease of Poliomyelitis has increased in varying degrees; and this outbreak of Polio, which we are at present experiencing, now of some 10 weeks' duration, leaves no room for complacency, as to the necessity of the specially trained fever nurse ready to meet emergency of such gravity.

Among those hospitals which have been largely called upon to nurse Poliomyelitis cases, Kendray Isolation Hospital, Barnsley, up to mid-August within 10 weeks of the outbreak had received no fewer than 77 cases, and we learn that 30 have recovered and 44 are still in hospital. In the Rotherham West Riding Division several cases have appeared. In Middlesex, Neasden Isolation Hospital had up to August 20th received a total of 110 cases, of these nine only have paralytic Poliomyelitis. The Western Hospital, Fulham, of which publications have appeared in these columns in connection with the nursing technique of the disease a good percentage indeed, many cases have been admitted. Some are still being nursed in respirators after tracheotomy. Nurses from the various London Teaching Hospitals have been assisting and gaining at the Western Hospital valuable training and experience from the incessant nursing care essential for these poor sufferers.

Strict quarantine conditions were imposed at Nescliffe Army Camp, near Shrewsbury, when a case—the child of a serving soldier, had been diagnosed and sent to a Military Hospital. By orders of the Camp Commandant on the instructions of the Medical Officer of Health, the married quarters estate was placed in quarantine for 21 days.

The family N.A.A.F.I. on the estate was placed out of bounds, except to those living on the estate. Parents were not to have social visits or contact with crowds, and parents and children barred from visiting the town. No visitors would be allowed on the estate. Children living in the married quarters had been forbidden to leave their homes or gardens.

The grave responsibility of the technical, skilled nursing required of this dread disease would seem to be a challenge taken up by the nurses with real zest, inspiring a high standard of nursing care.

The present outbreak of Polio, so far the most severe witnessed in this country, demonstrates the necessity of permanently established Isolation Hospitals—a need

so ably explained by Dr. Hugh Morrison, Medical Officer of Health, Taunton R.D.C.:—

Isolation Hospitals "Not Obsolete."

CRITICISM OF THE view sometimes put forward that isolation hospitals had become largely obsolete, was made by Dr. Hugh Morrison, Medical Officer of Health, Taunton R.D.C., speaking at a Sessional Meeting of the Royal Sanitary Institute held at Taunton on July 21st.

After saying that the erroneous idea had got around that very few cases were treated at isolation hospitals, due to the fact that there had been a concentration of beds into fewer centres and larger institutions, the speaker declared that in the remaining establishments the intake of cases had been maintained at a steady level.

While the work of the isolation hospital should be closely integrated with that of general hospitals in its area, there remained the problem of the nursing of these cases which, he believed, demanded a specialised technique best practised by a staff permanently engaged in this particular work.

The speaker went on to say that while they had seen the elimination in the United Kingdom of most of the "grosser environmental horrors," some of the commonest infections seemed reluctant to disappear.

"Immunisation," declared Dr. Morrison, "has brought about almost complete disappearance of diphtheria, but where has it taken us with the common cold?"

Referring to food hygiene, the speaker observed: "The diseases caused by infected foodstuffs are very far from being under complete control, and perhaps the full extent of this problem is not generally realised."

Can the rumour be true! that despite this necessity for the public good, the General Nursing Council is again considering the closure of the Fever Nurses Register? A retrograde step! which only some 18 months ago was strongly opposed by the Infectious Hospitals Matrons and Nurses Association, who were splendidly supported by the medical associations and societies.

The Infectious Hospitals Matrons and Nurses Association.

A MEETING of the Infectious Hospitals Matrons and Nurses Association will be held at Monsall Hospital, Manchester, by the kind invitation of the Matron, Miss Phillips, and the Management, at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday, October 29th, 1955.

Those wishing to attend are requested to let the Matron, Miss Phillips, know not later than October 28th.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)