

### Annotations.

#### WATER ADMINISTRATION AND PLUMBERS' WORK.

The recent establishment of the Metropolitan Water Board and the consequent proceedings before the Arbitration Court in connection with the purchase of the London Water Companies by the Board has drawn a considerable amount of public attention to the question of water supply, while the evidence of experts before the Arbitrators has brought prominently into view the existence of many points in which the practice of water administration might be improved, in the way of prevention of waste and contamination of the water, with consequent economic and sanitary benefit to all concerned.

An influential Conference of water authorities, architects, and plumbers met in November last in order to discuss various matters connected with the administration and distribution of water; and a Joint Committee on Water Regulations was appointed to undertake the task of systematising the methods of water administration in the United Kingdom—a task which the enormous growth of urban population in recent years, and the consequent possible inadequacy of the national sources of water supply, has rendered vitally necessary.

Sixteen of the chief water authorities and companies, supplying populations of 100,000 and upwards, the British Association of Waterworks Engineers, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the Worshipful Company of Plumbers, are among the bodies represented on the Committee.

Of the problems of water administration, the Committee will only take cognisance of those connected with the distribution of water for domestic and other purposes. The subject thus defined naturally divides itself under the three main heads of—(a) By-laws and Regulations; (b) Fittings and Materials; and (c) Workmanship; with each of which divisions a sub-committee has been appointed to deal.

The Sub-Committee on Workmanship will have at its disposal the accumulated experience of the Plumbers Company, which numbers among its members the most prominent members of the plumbing industry, and includes, in its organisation of registered plumbers, masters and workmen in all centres of the kingdom, and the evidence of expert plumbers will be adduced as to the best methods of workmanship to be employed with a view to preventing the waste, misuse, and contamination of water.

Mr. Crawford, of Glasgow, who presided at the Conference, in referring to the work of the Plumbers Company, said that the work of the Company had until lately been chiefly in connection with sanitation. The result of this work was well known, as practically all local authorities and all intelligent members of the public and operative and master plumbers were anxious to improve the quality of the work now being done, and thereby to give greater protection to the health of the people. Of late, however, it had become clear that the other side of the plumbers' work—namely, that relating to the introduction of water to the dwelling—required attention, for it was the business of the plumber to deal with water from its entrance into the house until it left the house, having done its beneficent work. It was now generally recognised by the Government and by all local authorities that economy in water—the prevention of waste—was a matter requiring very great care and attention.

The importance of the Plumbers' Registration Bill is recognised by all those interested in this matter as tending to place on a secure and permanent basis the present voluntary system of registration, and thus secure the efficiency of plumbers' work in connection with water fittings and generally; and it may be well to note that the Conference above referred to passed resolutions in support of the Bill, which should facilitate the matter being dealt with by Parliament during the present Session.

#### THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD AND JUVENILE SMOKING.

We are glad to note the action of the London School Board at a recent meeting, at which Lord Reay presided, in relation to juvenile smoking. It was moved by the Rev. William Brown, one of the Roman Catholic members, "That it be referred to the School Management Committee to consider and report what steps can be taken by the Board to discourage the injurious habit of cigarette smoking which is so prevalent among the boys of the Metropolis." Another member suggested that the motion should be referred to the Evening Schools Committee as well. An attempt was made to move the previous question, on the ground that the question was no business of the Board's. On a division, however, this was lost by forty-two votes to five, and the motion, as amended, adopted. The London School Board will be doing valuable service if it can secure any diminution in this pernicious habit.

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