

School Inspection in Toronto.

Dr. Helen MacMurchy, who is well known to nurses as the Editor—with the assistance of a board of nurses—of the *Canadian Nurse*, has recently been appointed a medical inspector of school children under the Board of Education in Toronto. Dr. MacMurchy has found certain difficulties in connection with the work which prevent the adequate performance of her duties, and she has embodied, in a letter to the Board, a most straightforward and lucid summary of the position. It is evident that the Board has a most valuable officer in her, and we sincerely hope that it will sever the restricting red tape which is at present impeding her usefulness.

Dr. MacMurchy proceeds to demonstrate that her letter of instructions shows that it is the intention of an official of the Board that she and her colleague shall be placed in a subordinate position, both to the Chief Inspector of Public Schools, and possibly also to the School Nurses. Before these instructions are passed by the Management Committee, the Board of Education, or the Board of Inspectors, she desires to lay before the Board of Education some considerations relative to the practical working out of these instructions, which would instantly occur to any expert in school hygiene, and gives as her reason, "I cannot satisfy myself that it would be right for me to keep silence upon a matter so important as the welfare of the children and the city, when I have the knowledge that in the opinion of those qualified to judge entitles me to speak. . . . Nothing but a sense of duty could have induced me to take the step I now take in addressing the Board."

THE MEDICAL OFFICERS' INSTRUCTIONS.

The instructions received by Dr. MacMurchy work out as follows:—

1. The teacher decides whether or not a child requires attention.
2. The teacher reports the names of those requiring attention to the principal.
3. The principal reports the names to the Chief Inspector.
4. The Chief Inspector decides whether or not the case should be dealt with at all.
5. If the Chief Inspector decides in the affirmative these cases will, except in special circumstances, be first investigated by the staff of nurses.
6. The Superintendent of Nurses will then report to the Chief Inspector daily the cases which should be attended by the medical officers when the names of the boys will be sent to Dr. Graham, and of the girls to Dr.

MacMurchy. Further cards are to be sent to notify parents of matters requiring their attention, the principals are to report once a week to the Chief Inspector the names of parents to whom cards have been sent, the cases are to be given once more to the nurses to ascertain what has been done, the nurses, if they consider it necessary the child should have special treatment, communicate with their Superintendent, who notifies the Chief Inspector, who communicates with a hospital or dispensary, etc.

It all sounds rather like Dickens' Circumlocution Office, but the usefulness of the Medical Inspectors under such circumstances is not very apparent.

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS.

Dr. MacMurchy proceeds to point out how the system works. She shows how in one instance when she was in a school a little girl asked the principal if she need go swimming as it made her ears bad. The principal replied, "Yes, you must all go; but here is the doctor, go and ask her." This was entirely improper according to the doctor's instructions, but if she had waited it might have been too late, as in the case of perforation of the drum of the ear septic infection and death might follow immersion. She therefore examined the child, found a perforation, and advised against the swimming.

Dr. MacMurchy says that small as is the sum paid to the Medical Inspectors she very much doubts if the citizens of Toronto are getting value for their money. "If," she asks, "the Chief Public School Inspector and the nurses are to decide, what is the use of having a doctor at all?" She further considers that in addition to the School Medical Officer there should be a leader in school hygiene. She deplores the fact that an unrivalled opportunity to provide an Open Air Recovery School (the most hopeful product of the school hygiene movement) has recently been allowed to pass, and says that the benefit to delicate children from a six months' stay in such a school is almost magical, but the school needs careful medical supervision. She further points out that the instructions of the School Medical Officer do not afford any opportunity of real usefulness to children needing special classes.

MODERN MOVEMENTS.

Again, Dr. MacMurchy writes:—

"Your medical officer should be conversant with the most recent movements, and discoveries in school hygiene all over the world.

To take a simple but most important example: The craze for the removal of tonsils very slightly enlarged and small adenoid growths which will disappear of themselves is passing

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