

A REPORT ON CONDENSED MILK.

An important report on condensed milks, with special reference to their use as infants' foods, by Dr. F. J. H. Coutts, has just been issued by the Local Government Board. In a prefatory letter to Mr. Burns, Dr. Arthur Newsholme, Medical Officer of the Board, says:—

Dr. Coutts has definitely ascertained that machine-skimmed condensed milk is used on a considerable scale for feeding infants, and he gives reasons which appear to point to the conclusion that this use is increasing. Infants are thus deprived of the fat which is essential for growth and health. There are serious drawbacks to the use, except as a temporary expedient, of full-cream sweetened condensed milk as an infants' food, the most objectionable feature being the presence of excess of sugar in relation to other food elements; but the use of skimmed condensed milk for the same purpose implies a slow process of partial starvation. Full-cream unsweetened condensed milk appears to be a suitable substitute, when required, for fresh cows' milk. The fact that it keeps less well than the sweetened variety is, perhaps, an additional safeguard, as it results in such milk being exposed for a shorter time to domestic contamination.

The experimental investigations by Drs. Gordon and Elmslie show that certain micro-organisms may survive the condensing process. All the epidemiological evidence points to the conclusion, however, that the infecting organisms of such diseases as scarlet fever, diphtheria, and enteric fever are destroyed in condensed milk. Direct experiments were carried out by Professor Delépine for the Board on milk which was artificially infected with tubercle bacilli, and subsequently condensed by one of the ordinary trade processes for this purpose. These experiments showed that, under the conditions of the particular factory, the tubercle bacilli were destroyed by the condensing process. (These experiments will be published at an early date, along with a report on similar experiments in regard to dried milk and milk powder.)

It has to be remembered that although condensed milk is bacteriologically purer than fresh cows' milk, its liability to contamination after the tin is opened makes it a dangerous food for infants during the summer months. This is aided, perhaps, by the lowered condition of nutrition associated with the continued use of a food which is commonly deficient in fat and contains excessive sugar. There is abundant evidence that babies fed on condensed milk suffer in a much higher proportion from epidemic diarrhoea than do babies fed on fresh cows' milk, and still more than babies who are breast-fed.

The increased risk of acute illness is not the only danger associated with the giving of condensed milk to babies. Perhaps, even more serious than this is the increased tendency to

rickets. There is ample evidence to show that the malnutrition caused by feeding babies on skimmed condensed milk produces a large excess of rickets; and there is no doubt that babies fed on full-cream condensed milk suffer from rickets to a greater extent than do babies who are breast-fed and, probably, more than babies fed on fresh cows' milk containing its full proportion of cream. The importance of rickets as a cause of other diseases as well as deformities in childhood and in after-life is insufficiently understood.

Representations have been made to the Board by resolutions of Conferences on Infant Mortality and from Sanitary Authorities and other public bodies to the effect that control should be exercised over articles supplied as food for infants, including condensed milk in its various forms; and in particular it has been urged that all tins of skimmed condensed milk should be required to bear on the labels a distinct warning that the contents are unfit for the food of infants.

These and other suggestions for the administrative control of the sale of condensed milk for the food of infants are discussed fully in Dr. Coutts's report, who confirms the most important of these recommendations as to the desirability of labelling all tins of condensed skimmed milk as being unfit for the food of infants.

A MODEL HOSPITAL AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

Nurses should make a point when visiting the Crystal Palace of inspecting the exhibit of Charing Cross Hospital.

The exhibit covers 800 square feet, and consists of an X Ray Demonstrating Room, an Operating Theatre, a Casualty Room, and a Hospital Ward.

The X Ray Demonstrating Room is fitted with one of the very latest coils, having a spark sixteen inches in length, and frequent demonstrations are given. The Operating Theatre is complete in every detail according to the most up-to-date ideas as regards construction and equipment.

The Casualty Room comprises all requisites for rendering first-aid and for the immediate reception of emergency cases and accidents.

The Hospital Ward, to which the entire right side of the exhibit is devoted, is a true and delightful illustration of the cheery, exquisitely clean, and generally attractive surroundings amidst which hospital patients of the present day are placed whilst being nursed back to health and strength by all the best science, skill, and attention can attain.

The whole exhibit has been fitted and equipped by the Hospitals and General Contracts Co., Ltd. (25-35, Mortimer Street, W.), and is in charge of trained nurses.

The "Festival of Empire" Exhibition closes on October 12th.

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