

The Tuberculosis Conference.

The Annual Conference of the National Association for the Prevention of Consumption and other forms of Tuberculosis, held at the Caxton Hall on July 19th, 20th, and 21st, and opened by the President of the Local Government Board, dealt with many matters of far-reaching importance, including—(1) *Education*: The spread of knowledge concerning tuberculosis amongst the community at large by lectures, literature, exhibitions, etc., and in the school. (2) *The Machinery of Detection*: The hospital, the tuberculosis dispensary, municipal and private effort. (3) *Treatment*: The sanatorium, its educational use; home treatment, treatment of the advanced cases. (4) *After-care of Patients*. (5) *The Administrative and Financial Aspects of the Insurance Bill*: The cost to the community of tuberculosis, the use of existing accommodation.

JULY 19th.

Sir William Younger presided at the morning session, when a message was read from the King, as Patron of the Association, sympathising deeply with its work.

A DECLINING DISEASE.

Mr. John Burns spoke of the pleasure and pride which it gave him to open this useful, practical, and human Conference, with its message of hope to nearly 300,000 people in the Kingdom. He said that King Tuberculosis had had notice to quit, that tuberculosis in all its forms was a declining disease, and in 25 or 30 years it ought to be as much a memory of the past as typhus, leprosy, and plague are now.

Coincident with the decline of tuberculosis, and a similar decline in the general death-rate and infant mortality, was a diminution of 25 per cent. in the drink bill. He mentioned that Professor Brouardel, of Paris, had said that the public-house was the purveyor of consumption, and alcoholism the most powerful factor in propagating tuberculosis. The decline in both consumption and alcoholism was concurrent with better housing, and was collateral with the growing education, sobriety, better homes, and social improvement of the people and their moral elevation.

Mr. Burns emphasised the fact that sobriety and cleanliness were indispensable in the fight against consumption, and said that if it were possible to make all the poor as clean and well fed as the nurses in consumption hospitals they could be made as immune as those heroic girls.

To those who complained of the burden imposed on the ratepayers by the requirements

of the Public Health Service, the President of the Local Government Board gave figures to show that of 4,000 Poor Law consumptives in Liverpool 60 per cent. were paupers because they were consumptive. Pauperism was reduced by combatting consumption. He mentioned that the Local Government Board had authorised local authorities to establish dispensaries, to purchase cheap, portable shelters for use in gardens and yards, and to distribute literature. He further stated that he had a Milk Bill ready, its passage was essential and urgent, and if he could get an agreed Bill he would do his best to secure it at once; but it would not be right to emasculate a good Bill simply to get it through Parliament in the next month or five weeks.

Mr. Burns further said that he had been asked by the Prime Minister, who followed the work of the Local Government Board with characteristic clarity of vision, to convey a message of good cheer, luck, and hope to the Conference.

EDUCATION.

PROFESSOR SIMS WOODHEAD, in his introductory address, emphasised the value of the District Nurse and Health Visitor in tuberculosis work, with special reference to the work in Cambridge. He said: "It is not many years since the experiment of providing such officials was looked upon as being entirely outside the functions of a Public Health Committee, or, indeed, of a committee of any kind, but a series of voluntary committees, of which we have had one in Cambridge, have done most admirable work, and have demonstrated the enormous possibilities of the system. . . . The value of the District Nurse and the Health Visitor is a factor in the education of the mothers of our towns and smaller communities that can scarcely be over estimated."

DR. F. C. SHRUBSHALL, Assistant School Medical Officer, L.C.C., said that in the elementary schools the formal teaching follows the code of the Board of Education, which prescribes hygiene instruction adapted to the ages and sexes of the scholars in the elementary rules of personal health, particularly in respect of food, drink (including alcohol), clothing, cleanliness, and fresh air. The educative value of medical inspection, and of the nurses' visits, deserved attention, as mothers had distinctly improved for the better. A parent in a poor district was reported to have said: "It used to be enough to give Mary a clean pinafore on Mondays; now she has to be cleaned all over."

SIR WILLIAM YOUNGER followed with an interesting paper on "Tuberculosis Exhibitions

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