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EDITORIAL.

TREATMENT CENTRES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN.

One of the most important national problems at the present time is the provision of adequate medical treatment for elementary school children; for medical inspection without subsequent treatment is useless. It is therefore not surprising that the British Medical Association is actively interesting itself in this problem, and that a deputation from the Association was recently received by the Right Hon. J. A. Pease, M.P., President of the Board of Education, in reference to the medical inspection of the school children of London.

There appears to be two distinct schools of thought as to the best methods of dealing with the question, the one advocating the treatment of the children in the out-patient departments of hospitals, on terms arranged between the hospital committees and the local education authorities, and the other the establishment of School Clinics, or—as they are now called by the London County Council—Treatment Centres.

Sir Victor Horsley who, as reported by the *British Medical Journal*, introduced the above deputation, forcibly advocated the adoption of the latter method by the London County Council in connection with its scholars. The scheme of the British Medical Association, formulated in representative meeting, is that all schools in the metropolis shall be grouped, and that for each group of schools there shall be a School Clinic staffed by practitioners of the neighbourhood. The Association condemns the hospital scheme as involving, in the words of the Board of Education, "leakage, waste, confusion, and administrative chaos," to which the Association adds "medical inefficiency." It contends that the hospital scheme has been notoriously a failure, and that hospitals are not institu-

tions fitted to carry out the special treatment required by elementary school children, further that the hospitals are not prepared to undertake the work, only eight hospitals in London (and those within a small area) being at work at the present time. Additional points in favour of the clinics are that the Association's scheme would provide continuous treatment associated with a system of inspection; being situated close to the schools the clinics would naturally be visited by the school inspecting officer, so that inspection and treatment would go together.

In his reply, the President of the Board of Education said that the Board believed that the ideal was the establishment of clinics very much on the lines which some of the speakers had indicated, but reminded the deputation that the local education authority (*i.e.*, the London County Council) was responsible. While they were not perhaps going forward so rapidly as every one would like, progress was being made, and he could only say that he was anxious that the hospital system should not be a permanent system. The Board was doing its very utmost to establish by its influence those clinics which the British Medical Association looked forward to seeing established.

We entirely endorse the views so ably put forward by Sir Victor Horsley on behalf of the British Medical Association. Nurses cannot for one moment imagine that the outpatient departments of hospitals are suitable centres for the treatment of school children, and, now that the work is being organized, it is important organization should proceed on the best lines. Moreover the London County Council has its own highly efficient staff of school nurses, and to these nurses, closely in touch with the children and the problems affecting them, should be deputed the practical application of the prescribed treatment, if the best results are to be obtained.

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