

THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL AND NURSING HOMES.

At the meeting of the London County Council on Tuesday, November 11th, the Public Control Committee presented a further report in relation to the proposed legislation for the control of nursing homes, and massage, manicure, and electric treatment establishments. The proposals differ somewhat from those originally made inasmuch as registration is substituted for annual licensing.

The Public Control Committee reported its opinion that if the evil complained of (the use of the above establishments as disorderly houses) was to be stamped out, severe penalties must be imposed on offenders.

The Committee advised against acceding to the representations of a number of Metropolitan Borough Councils that as they usually initiate proceedings under the Disorderly Houses Act the duty of administering the powers to be sought should be cast upon the Borough Councils.

The Council adopted the recommendation that it should seek powers from Parliament in 1914, providing that premises used for the purposes above specified shall be required to be registered. Further, that it shall be an offence knowingly to advertise, or print or publish an advertisement, of any owner or occupier who has been struck off the Register. The charge for registration is not to exceed £2 2s. Anyone carrying on or causing to be advertised an unregistered house is to be liable to a penalty not exceeding £50, and a daily penalty not exceeding £20 for the first offence, and the maximum penalties with or without imprisonment for a second offence. It will also be a penal offence to obstruct officers of the registration authority.

Mr. Isidore Salmon advocated control being placed in the hands of the Borough Councils, on the ground that all such Councils already had inspectors who could carry out the work. Mr. Leon pointed out that they had not the machinery to register nursing homes, 99 per cent. of which were respectable and efficient. On the other hand, bad houses were managed by astute people who were constantly changing. Mr. Bryant agreed that only a central authority would have power to trace these people in all parts of London. Mr. P. C. Simmons, Chairman of the Public Control Committee, said that the object of the proposed registration was to get rid of what was at present a disgrace to London—the use of massage and manicure establishments as disorderly houses. Very few nursing homes were used in this way. There need not be a large number of new inspectors, as Mr. Salmon feared, as existing inspectors in connection with employment agencies and the Shop Acts could be utilised.

Mr. Salmon's amendment was lost, and the proposals of the Committee adopted.

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

WOMEN.

"THE CURE OF POVERTY."

An interesting discussion, followed by a debate, took place at the International Women's Franchise Club, 9, Grafton Street, London, W., on the above subject on Wednesday the 5th inst. The spacious drawing-room was packed with an attentive audience.

The Rev. Dr. Joseph Hochman was in the chair, and introduced the first speaker, Miss Mabel Atkinson, M.A., whose arguments ran on Socialistic lines, viz., the extinction of the landowner and the capitalist. She was followed by Dr. C. V. Drysdale, D.Sc., M.I.E.E., who whilst agreeing with most of Miss Mabel Atkinson's statements regarding the present conditions of poverty in our country, disagreed with her entirely as to the best remedy for the removal of the evil. "There is *one* remedy," said Dr. Drysdale. "One must cut one's coat according to one's cloth." Applause from the audience, composed largely of women. Our minds doubtless flew to the many shifts and contrivances to "make two ends meet" that have haunted our dreams in the past, and are likely to haunt them still more in the future. The cutting down of luxuries, the giving up of pleasures "beyond our means."

But from this trend of thought we were abruptly pulled up by the speaker, who proceeded to give us an illuminating address on "The Limitation of Families" as the best, the most speedy, the one radical cure for poverty. "In five or six years," said Dr. Drysdale, "poverty would cease to exist, if combination and co-operation in this matter could be attained."

Cela donne à penser as the French say, and one evening was not long enough for debate on such a weighty matter, and allowed no time for proposals and suggestions as to other means and ways less fraught with danger to the nation. I should like to have asked the speaker if Temperance might not, in the course of a few years, change the sordid and squalid homes of England into bright and prosperous ones. If a return of all classes to a simple life with simple pleasures might not save the breakdown of the breadwinner and the poverty entailed when he or she is laid low. If our present life of excitement and the extravagance engendered by it were curtailed, would not our present poverty disappear? Is it not to a great extent caused by our refusal to "cut our coat according to our cloth"? Another discussion might be of great help in solving this problem. The remedy has not been discovered by the men who legislate for us. Let us women search diligently until we find it!

ANNIE E. HULME.

A visit should be paid to *The Englishwoman's* Exhibition of Arts and Crafts, at the Maddox Street Galleries, W. It is fine, and closes on the 15th November.

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