

ROYAL COMMISSION ON VENEREAL DISEASES.

Sir John Collie at the 48th meeting of the Commission gave the results of some observations he had recently made in connection with 2,176 men referred to him for medical report. The 2,176 men were divided into three classes: (1) 1,119 whom accident or illness had overtaken; (2) 557 apparently healthy, but required to pass medical examination before entering employment; (3) 500 of the same class as the second division, but who also submitted themselves to the Wassermann test. Of all three divisions, 106 were found to be suffering from venereal disease. In the first two divisions in connection with which clinical evidence was relied upon, 60 or 3.8 per cent. were found to be infected; in the third class, where the Wassermann test was applied, 46 or 9.2 per cent. were shown to have had syphilis.

The 500 cases of those apparently in perfect health (as evidenced by a thorough physical examination) were taken consecutively as they presented themselves for examination, and no selection was made except that working class people over 21 years of age only were chosen. 103 of the 500 had served in the Army or Navy, and of these 24, or 18.9 per cent. gave a positive Wassermann reaction; the percentage of positive reactions in the remainder of the 500 was only 6.

Sir John stated that the figures probably did not represent the full extent of the existence of the disease, for the men examined were of a somewhat superior artisan class.

An interesting feature of the investigation was the fact that the Wassermann test showed a positive reaction in as many as 12, 16 and 19 years, and in one case as late as 29 years after infection and long after all recollection of the infection had disappeared.

Mr. Frederick McCann, Surgeon to the Samaritan Free Hospital for Women, said that it was of the utmost importance that syphilis and gonorrhœa should be regarded as common female ailments for which the same facilities for treatment should be available as for other female ailments without any special stigma being attached to them. If proper facilities for in-patient and out-patient treatment were provided the special aspects of these diseases would to a large extent disappear.

Systematic instruction in the early local signs of syphilis and the signs and symptoms of gonorrhœa was much required; this instruction should be given at the special hospitals for women and in the gynæcological departments of the general hospitals.

It was essential that gonorrhœa should be regarded as a serious disease in both sexes, especially in women, and that prompt and effectual treatment was required. The medical profession could do much in this respect by impressing upon patients the gravity of the disease and the necessity for curative treatment.

Dr. Chalmers, Medical Officer of Health for Glasgow, gave supplementary evidence at the 49th meeting of the Commission with reference to the experience of the Health Committee of the Corporation of Glasgow. He stated that ophthalmia neonatorum was made compulsorily notifiable in Glasgow in 1911, and that in the beginning an attempt was made to supervise the cases at the homes. It was, however, soon apparent that there was definite need for provision being made for hospital treatment. Arrangements had accordingly been made for this treatment and it had been necessary in some cases to provide also for the reception into hospital of the mother.

Their experience had shown that a proportion of children affected with ophthalmia neonatorum also suffered from congenital syphilis, and that the resultant defects in vision were greatest when the diseases were concurrent. In the period ending December, 1913, of 463 children suffering from ophthalmia neonatorum, 13.6 per cent. were found also to be syphilitic.

With regard to syphilis generally the Corporation of Glasgow had made arrangements for placing opportunities of obtaining a Wassermann test at the disposal of any practitioners who desired it, and in view of the information required with any specimen sent for examination, it had been arranged to pay a fee of 2s. 6d.

Dr. Chalmers was of opinion that no form of compulsory notification of venereal disease, whether for any group of persons, or of cases, would effect its object. His view was that the public required not compulsion but education, and he thought that the issue of an authoritative statement showing the danger to life in after years of syphilis contracted at an earlier period, and of the disastrous effect on children would help to form an educated public opinion which would at least induce those who might contract the disease to seek effective treatment, even if it failed in the ultimate purpose of inducing them to avoid exposure to it.

The main problem at the present time was the organisation of means of diagnosis and treatment.

AN ANTISEPTIC CLEANSER.

An antiseptic cleanser, now being used in many hospitals, is Gospo, which is rightly a favourite with nurses, on account of the efficiency with which it does its work. Marble, mosaic, terrazzo, linoleum, enamelled articles, kitchen utensils and many others can be cleaned to perfection where Gospo is used. The makers, Gospo, Ltd., 33, Waterloo Road, London, S.E., who are contractors to H.M. Government, claim further and make good their claim that as it contains no animal fat or injurious acids, it eradicates grease and dirt; and floors on which it is used are not only bright, but entirely non-slipping—a substantial advantage which needs no emphasis to nurses.

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