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## EDITORIAL.

### FLY CONTROL.

#### A CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF EPIDEMICS BY INSECTS IN WAR TIME.

One of the lessons which this war is driving home to us is the importance of setting our house in order before, and not after, emergencies occur in which such order is all important, and the National League for Physical Education and Improvement has done well to inaugurate a campaign to prevent the spread of epidemics by insects in war time, at a meeting at the Mansion House on Monday last; for insects are some of the most potent foes to be fought in the present war. Lice—as is now well known—spread the deadly typhus, and have killed more soldiers in Serbia than the Austrian bullets, and flies, formerly regarded as harmless nuisances, are now recognized as gross feeders on every kind of putrefactive matter, and the infective agent in enteric fever, dysentery, and infantile and other forms of diarrhoea.

Point was given to the importance of the subject at the Mansion House by the fact that Sir Frederick Treves who was to have presided was unable to do so, and wrote as the reason "More than a month ago—just before I left for Mudros—I acquired, through flies I expect, a complaint in Alexandria, which gradually got worse, until now I am laid up in bed and unable to do anything . . . Flyborne disease should cease to exist. Its very existence is a discredit to the intelligence of the people."

Bishop Boyd Carpenter who presided at the meeting emphasised the fact that modern trade facilities had brought the nations very close together in point of time, and so made the transference of infection a terribly easy matter. The fly enemy was worse than the German spy.

Dr. Louis Sambon spoke of the devastating effects in war of flyborne diseases.

Professor Lefroy drew attention to the House Fly Exhibition at the Zoological Gardens which would show that everyone could do something to help to stamp out the pest. The house fly was a great agent in spreading summer diarrhoea which annually slew from 5,000 to 15,000 children, and also spread enteric and cholera.

This year from the primitive conditions of the large camps it was probable there would be an increase in fly epidemics.

There were three ways of helping on the campaign against epidemics caused by flies. (1) *Education*. (The fly crawling on the baby's face was capable of spreading typhoid germs for a fortnight). (2) *Sanitation*. (a) Owing to a shortage of labour scavenging this year would not be thorough. Household refuse should be burnt whenever possible. (b) Infected persons should be isolated and mothers should be taught to keep children with infantile diarrhoea very clean. (3) *Fly control*. This afforded work for every one. The present promised to be a fly year. There were probabilities of a typhoid epidemic and possibilities of cholera. We must insist on cleanliness, and exercise measures of fly control.

Professor Simpson of King's College said that the Chinese had a season known as "the awakening of the insects," and he had come to the conclusion that such a season existed here.

Dr. Nidegger of the United States Health Service emphasized the importance of enlisting women in the campaign.

London's antiquated system of scavenging, and the exposure of food in shops and restaurants were also subjects for comment.

The importance of a thorough campaign against flies is evident, and the National League are doing good work in pressing it home.

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