

VENEREAL DISEASE.

NOTIFICATION AND TREATMENT BY SPECIALISTS.

We are indebted to the *Times* for an outspoken expression of opinion on the question of notification of venereal disease, which we warmly approve.

The *Times* announces that it has received the Report on Venereal Diseases by a Committee of the Department of Trade and Customs of the Commonwealth of Australia.

"This document," it says, "is of great interest, because it shows how the problem can be handled when the handling is left to determined men having a single object in view. Indeed, to compare this policy of 'thorough' with our own halting, half-hearted measures is to realize how firmly the idea of compromise is rooted in the English official mind."

"The following are the more important suggestions with regard to State legislation, the object of which is defined as 'to secure that every person suffering from venereal disease is under efficient treatment and continues under such treatment until no longer infective':—

That it be unlawful for any person other than a legally qualified medical practitioner to treat any case of venereal disease. The treatment of venereal disease by quacks is a great evil, an admitted evil, but treatment by chemists, some of whom advertise specially, is also an evil. Proper treatment by them is impossible. The chance of early and complete cure is lost. The trade in proprietary medicines for venereal disease, except under medical control, is costly and harmful to the public.

"Our Local Government Board has ignored the quack—whose loathsome and insidious advertisements are the means of ruining hundreds of young lives annually!

That every person suffering from venereal disease be required to consult a medical practitioner and to place himself and remain under treatment by that practitioner with provision for transfer, if desired, to another such practitioner.

That every medical practitioner shall report to the appointed health authority in prescribed form when a patient comes under his professional notice with any venereal disease. The report to give the sex and age of the patient and the nature of the disease, but not the patient's name.

That if such a patient shall not again consult such practitioner within an approved period and such practitioner has not received a notice from another practitioner of transfer of the case, the practitioner shall send to the appointed health authority a notice in a prescribed form giving the patient's name and address.

That every practitioner attending a case of

venereal disease shall deliver to the patient a written notice warning him of the infectious character of the disease and of the legal penalty of communicating the disease to others and against marrying before he has received a certificate of cure.

"It is further recommended that the Minister administering the Act may order an infected person to be treated, and that every kind of advertisement dealing with these diseases or with sexual matters be prohibited. An educational campaign is also suggested, and the lines of it are laid down. The question of treatment is fully considered, and it is advised that, 'in the great towns, special clinics should be provided at the hospitals for patients in the infectious stage, under special staffs with large experience in new methods; and medical practitioners and medical students should be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the practice of such clinics.'

"This, then, is the ideal mentioned in the *Times* when the scheme of the Local Government Board was discussed—notification and treatment by specialists. It would be difficult to find a better scheme or to improve on the suggestions made. Notification without in the first instance betraying the patient's name is an admirable solution. If the patient fails in his duty, he is then made to suffer for it.

"It is surely a lamentable thought that our authorities have virtually abandoned the idea of notification as unworkable, thus leaving the innocent to suffer for the guilty, and have apparently been unable to pluck up courage to attack the quack, thus sacrificing youth to a veritable hell of doubt and anxiety, the end of which too often is death."

ZEPPELIN FRIGHT.

Dr. Armstrong-Jones, the eminent mental specialist, says:—"A large number of officers and men have suffered from shock, fatigue and exhaustion, and the most complete and careful arrangements have been made for those who have had mental shocks, but the scheme has the defects of its qualities in causing some delay. We do not get these cases at Claybury, because they are not certified as insane until they are discharged from the Army. What we have had are patients, both men and women, suffering from fright and shock from Zeppelin raids. On admission they suffer from every physical as well as mental symptoms of fright, but they recover after a period of rest and reassurance. With this exception there has been less insanity since the war broke out."

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