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EDITORIAL.

THE ERADICATION OF VENEREAL DISEASE.

On Friday, July 2nd, Dr. Addison, Minister of Health, received a representative deputation from the Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease. The deputation, which was introduced by Lord Willoughby de Broke, presented the following resolution, passed unanimously at the recent annual meeting of the Society:—

That inasmuch as the Ministry of Health has failed, and public bodies (including the London County Council) have declined, to provide the means of delayed disinfection against venereal disease at ablution centres, this meeting calls upon the Ministry of Health and upon local authorities to instruct all qualified chemists to sell such means of immediate self-disinfection against venereal disease as may be approved from time to time by the Ministry of Health or by medical officers of health.

Captain W. E. Elliot, M.P., Dr. Sequeira, Sir Archdale Reid, Mr. H. Wansey Bayly, Dr. Mearns Fraser, Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane, Sir James Crichton Browne, and Dr. Saleeby were the speakers.

TO AVOID CONTAGION, AVOID CONTACT.

Lord Willoughby de Broke urged two lines of defence against venereal disease; firstly, that "if you wish to avoid contagion, you had better avoid contact," and secondly, the immediate self-disinfection of those who have exposed themselves to infection. The policy of disinfecting centres bristled with difficulties, and the Society he represented was addressing itself to the efficacy of immediate self-disinfection, and recommended that the Ministry of Health should take steps to educate the public in the whole hygiene of this important subject, and to direct wisely and scientifically the knowledge which had been coming out since the war.

THE HIDDEN HAND IN PATHOLOGY.

Sir James Crichton Browne emphasised the immense economic loss to the nation caused by venereal disease, which he described as the "hidden hand in pathology," and said it was daily being discovered that diseases which had hitherto been ascribed to other causes had syphilis at their root.

Dr. Addison, replying to the deputation, said there was no difference between the Society and the Ministry in their desire to do everything possible to combat, or prevent, venereal disease. It was suggested by the deputation that the Ministry should issue certain instructions to the local authorities and the public. They were dealing with one of the most difficult of social problems, and it would be necessary to have an overwhelming case to justify such an action, in connection with which they would have to contend with a great wave of public feeling, which would suggest that the Government was really encouraging vice. They had to have a very strong case that would meet the intense and vehement opposition that such a proposal would arouse. To adopt such a proposal towards the population as a whole would be held, and he thought with material ground, as doing something which would tend to encourage people to run risks. Personally, his mind was directed to one issue, and as far as he was concerned, whether it meant unpopularity or contempt—he did not care a bit—he had only one desire, and that was to see whether there was a sufficient basis of ascertained fact to justify him in proceeding on the lines suggested.

The intense and vehement opposition to which Dr. Addison alluded is, we realise, likely to proceed from the salt of the earth, from good women who have never come into contact with the results of venereal disease, and

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