

ROYAL SANITARY INSTITUTE.

CONGRESS AT BOURNEMOUTH.

There was much enthusiasm evinced, and with justice, at the splendid meetings of the Royal Sanitary Institute Congress. I attended the sessions of "Sanitary Science" and of Maternity and Child Welfare, including School Hygiene. The presidential addresses of these had an audience of 300 and the average attendance was about 100.

Sir George Newman urged co-ordination between Maternity and Child Welfare and School Hygiene, which were all one problem, and advocated that where possible the same institution should be used and the same medical and nursing officers employed. Scientific study of (1) Maternal Mortality, (2) Infant Mortality, (3) Morbidity and Death, 1 to 5 years, (4) Morbidity and Death, 5 to 14 years, should be carefully made by those in authority of each several area and the results compared with those obtained elsewhere.

He said that the mothers, in producing healthy children, gave the State the highest and best form of service, and that we ought to see to it that at the time of making their patriotic—he would almost say divine—contribution, all mothers should have the advantage of being well handled and having skilled help. Mothers should have better homes as well as better midwifery service.

There is far too little care given to the 1 to 5 year old child, for at 5 years of age 35 per cent. require medical attention, and it is just between 1 to 5 years that the great immunities of life from preventable disease may be established. At 5 years, too, education, in his opinion, should be more of nurture than instruction.

At the present time though the nation asks for preventive medicine and the Public Health Service is capable of supplying it, there is not sufficient money forthcoming. It should be remembered, however, that to have the means for creating a healthy nation, able to work and enjoy life, no economy in other directions can be more well worth while. Health Service is not reducing disease and death, but creating a new life—a better, larger, and stronger life, bodily, mentally, and for that we call the soul. Much has been accomplished within the past fifteen years. Four outstanding facts should give inspiration for further efforts:—

Two and a-quarter million children have been placed under immediate medical supervision.

One thousand clinics exist, at which millions of attendances are made annually by children.

The verminous child has disappeared from our schools.

Real malnutrition no longer exists.

The address was altogether very inspiring, and he charged all to work and take courage by remembering, as he did, that in the words of Emerson, we must learn the great lesson of putting the meaning of the centuries and years over against the days and hours, that the work now being done would show its fruit a hundred years hence.

The discussions were all at a really high level and many persons of note and of wide experience took part.

Bournemouth did wonders in the way of hospitality and concessions of tram fares, pier tolls and so forth. The Exhibition was well attended.

E. B. KINGSFORD.

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC MENTAL HOSPITALS.

This Committee, consisting of Sir Cyril Cobb, K.B.E., M.P. (Chairman), Dr. Percy Smith, M.D., F.R.C.P., and Dr. Bedford Pierce, M.D., F.R.C.P., with Mr. P. Barter as Secretary, which was appointed in December last to investigate the charges made by Dr. Lomax in his book "The Experiences of an Asylum Doctor," has now issued its report.

The following is a brief summary of the Committee's principal recommendations:—

(a) That for the future the size of mental hospitals should so far as possible be limited to accommodation for 1,000 patients.

(b) That in classification of patients, account should be taken of the home conditions and surroundings from which they come.

(c) That the Superintendent of a mental hospital should be a medical man who should have undivided control of the medical and administrative work; and that a small Advisory Board, preferably associated with the Board of Control, should be available for consultation by Visiting Committees when making these appointments.

(d) That the number of Assistant Medical Officers should be increased, and that facilities for study-leave should be given.

(e) That the Departmental Committee on the Nursing Service should consider whether some distinction cannot be made between the two duties of mental nurses, namely, nursing proper and social duties, and that the hours devoted to the former should be relatively few, but that more time should be given to the latter, and that the present rigid system involving short shifts of duty should be discontinued.

(f) That the diet of mental hospitals requires improvement in the direction of greater variety.

(g) That the employment of patients could be improved by the appointment of a special officer at each institution as Occupations Officer.

(h) That the organisation of after-care work needs to be considerably strengthened and extended.

(i) That the possibilities of co-ordinating higher research work by concentrating it in a few fully equipped institutions should be considered.

(j) That Visiting Committees should be strengthened by the co-option of persons who have special qualifications and time to devote to the work, and that they should consider the authorisation of some small unofficial committee to visit the mental hospitals from time to time.

(k) That the Board of Control needs additional assistance to carry out their work.

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