

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

CONGRESS OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

The Congress of the Royal Institute of Public Health which met in Dublin on August 15th, 16th, and 17th, and which was attended by over 300 delegates from all parts of the world, was one of far-reaching influence.

As reported in the *Times*, Mr. Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Local Government and Public Health, in his presidential address delivered at the Mansion House, welcomed the delegates to Dublin. The interchange of the knowledge and the ideas of the workers in the field of public health, he said, while adding to their own fund of practical experience and strengthening their capacity for fuller service, must support the general offensive against the common enemy, disease. The alleviation of suffering and of misery due to preventive causes was the common duty of all nations. In Ireland the general effect of the Public Health Acts had brought about a sweetened and improved social life. While no elaborate system of research was carried out in Ireland advantage was taken of the general world advance of scientific knowledge. Typhus fever had as a result virtually disappeared, and it might be safely anticipated that enteric fever, which furnished perhaps the most important index of sanitary progress, would in the near future become almost as rare as typhus fever.

The progress made could be seen by considering the death-rate due to the principal epidemic diseases in recent years. The names of William Smyth, of Arranmore, who contracted typhus fever while helping to remove patients to hospital, and Dr. Adrian Stokes, who contracted yellow fever while investigating the origin of the disease, would be remembered as types of many others who gave up their lives in bringing safety to mankind.

CONGRESS KERNELS.

Maternity and Child Welfare.

"Up to the end of the Victorian era it was not good form to discuss maternity," said Professor Louise McIlroy (Professor of the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Unit of the London School of Medicine for Women), in her presidential address to the maternity and child welfare and school medical inspection section of the Congress. "Now," she said, "it was a proper subject for discussion. Obstetrical work was the basis of strength of the nation, but it was too localised. Municipalities and Governments should give grants to enable the work to be carried on so that every woman living in the remotest part of the country could receive its benefits. We must realise," she declared, "that every poor woman is doing a soldier's work for the nation in producing children."

"The work of the X-ray specialist in the ante-natal clinics was among the important advances in obstetrics. Recently the husband of one of her patients and the patient herself knew as a result of the X-ray that she was going to have triplets eight or nine weeks before the babies were born. The interests of the mother and the child should be one during confinement. Modern ante-natal methods of treatment had proved that, and the scientific teaching of the profession was now in line with that of the Roman Catholic Church."

The Production and Control of Milk and Food.

"Speaking on the production and control of milk and food, Dr. Gerald Leighton (Scottish Board of Health) said that traders concerned with the use of chemicals had tried to induce the public to believe that chemical preservatives were necessary with mincemeats and cream. It was ridiculous to contend that fresh meat must be so treated, and cream could be marketed quite well otherwise. There

was much room for improvement in the method of handling and transporting food, and there was a great need for the introduction of properly refrigerated vans for the carrying of perishable foods, such as milk and meat."

Milk Bottles as a Possible Cause of Disease.

"Milk Bottles as a Possible Cause of Disease" was the title of a joint paper by Dr. E. G. Gibbs Smith, Medical Officer of Health, Teddington, and Mr. F. T. G. Hobday, Principal of the Royal Veterinary College. The great majority of people, they said, "were now receiving milk which was far more liable to contamination than it was by the old method. They suggested that authorities should be given power to condemn unsuitable storage and delivery vessels. There should be a destructible retainer for retail delivery which would do away with bottle-cleansing difficulties. If used at all, bottles should be of a standard shape, and all bottles and containers should be capped in such a way as to make it easy to remove the cap without any dirt entering the bottle. It was the duty of the public health authorities not to let the pecuniary interests of large distributors stand in the way of the abolition of any method of milk distribution which either does or is likely to jeopardise the health of the community."

The Expectation of Life.

Speaking on "The Expectation of Life and the Bacteriological Laboratory," Professor J. W. Biggar (Dublin University) said:—"Certainly the expectation of life has increased, and will further increase. This does not mean that we shall have an undue proportion of aged invalids kept alive in some new system of incubators, but that preventable disease will be prevented, and as a necessary corollary disease and ill-health will be diminished and the tendency will be toward deaths from true old age—a natural and nearly equal diminution of vital activities leading to a prolonged and gentle sleep and a painless passing out to replace the unnatural death which the human race all too often experiences."

At the Annual Dinner at the Mansion House, Dublin, messages from the King and the Prince of Wales were read.

Message from the King.

"I heartily thank you, the Fellows, delegates, and members of the Royal Institute of Public Health, for the loyal greetings and good wishes which I have received, with much satisfaction from your Congress at Dublin. As patrons of the Institute the Queen and I greatly appreciate your kind references to our interest in anything that conduces to the happiness and welfare of the community. We are confident that nothing but good results can be secured from the meeting and exchange of views of those who devote themselves so wholeheartedly to the study of the best means of raising the standard of health and housing, and we offer our best wishes for the success of the Congress.—GEORGE, R.I."

HEALTH EDUCATION.

The first Course in Health Education for workers in continuation schools is, says *The Public Health Nurse*, to be offered by Teachers College, Columbia University (New York) in the Fall of 1928. The new Course is planned to meet the specific needs which have been clearly recognised in a thorough, constructive study now being made in the New York City continuation schools, and this Course is to be given at the request of the Committee directing that project.

Among subjects to be considered are "Safety and First Aid in the Job"; "Posture and the Job"; "Nutrition for the Worker," and others. This Course is approved by the New York Board of Examiners, and accepted for credit towards a teaching licence for continuation schools.

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