

reasons for the action of the approved societies in this matter are to be found in reports made by their representatives who were sent abroad to study the question of the treatment of rheumatism in European countries. This investigation was undertaken because of the very serious loss which the approved societies were suffering in their finances, and in the loss of time of their members, by reason of the prevalence of rheumatism among the population generally.

The report states that there can be no question as to the value of treatment in the early stages of rheumatism, and for this early treatment little or no provision exists in England. The independent inquiries made by the medical men confirmed the findings of the approved societies' representatives, with the result that they jointly approached the British Red Cross Society and asked for their help in the campaign. They suggested that the British Red Cross Society was the appropriate body to appeal to the country as a whole, and they also pointed out that the Society had the necessary machinery for raising the funds required, whereas neither the approved societies nor the medical men had any special organisation for this purpose.

The Executive Committee undertook the work, with the result that the £40,000 necessary to equip and build the first clinic was speedily raised, and it is hoped to open this clinic in October next in the neighbourhood of Regent's Park.

#### THE MOSQUITO.

Mr. J. Omer Cooper, M.A., F.I.S., Lecturer in Zoology at Armstrong College, University of Durham, draws attention in a letter to the *Times* to the danger of mosquito bites, which has just been emphasised by the deaths of five people in the s.s. *Duchess of Atholl* from this cause.

He writes:—

"Of all pests the mosquito is the most prolific and the most cruel. Not content with sucking blood, it spews into the wound a horrible spittle often laden with parasites. That such a pest should live almost unchallenged over large parts of our tropical possessions is hard to understand. Those who travel in the tropics should provide themselves with a mixture of one part of oil of lavender to five parts of citronella oil. This mixture does not irritate the skin, and used undiluted on the parts exposed will prevent the attack of mosquitoes. A small quantity should be rubbed into the skin every two or three hours; if this is done thoroughly few bites will be experienced, as it does not rapidly evaporate. Such preventive treatment, however, is but a temporary method. To make the tropics safe we must get rid of the mosquito.

"By enlisting the aid of an insect's natural enemies—a process known as biological control—its numbers can often be greatly reduced even over wide regions.

"The work of biological control rests with a few entomologists scattered here and there over the Empire.

"In the low-lying regions of Africa and India the mosquito is a terrible curse; both settler and native suffer, and the condition of the children is pitiful. The loss of human life and happiness is appalling; the cost in lost efficiency must amount to millions of pounds every year. No stone should be left unturned to find a remedy."

#### "A DESERT OF THE PAST AND A DUSTHEAP OF THE FUTURE."

Indignation is growing against the proposal of the Electricity Commissioners to erect a power station at Battersea and the Westminster City Council have passed the following resolution:—

"That this Council views with considerable alarm the possibility of serious injury to health and property which may be caused by the emission of sulphur fumes from the proposed electricity power station at Battersea, and that the Electricity Commissioners be asked to re-open

the whole question of the erection of the proposed station with a view to consideration being given to the selection of a site outside the Metropolis, where the emission of fumes, soot, and dust cannot prove to be injurious to health and property."

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Lang) is an outspoken opponent, not solely on account of the injury caused by sulphurous fumes and gritty soot. Speaking at the Royal Academy Banquet on May 4th, he said:—"How can a civic sense of beauty survive the progress of a civilisation which is making a desert of the past and a dustheap of the future? In a community which suffers these things the general sense of beauty must sooner or later perish, and with it all the capacity to welcome, to support, to understand any form of noble art.

"We look to the Royal Academy to take a leading part among those striving to rescue the sense of beauty from the thrall of a soulless utility."

It is to be hoped that the Electricity Commissioners will listen to reason, but in our opinion the proposal should never have been made.

#### THE SMALLPOX OUTBREAK.

The outbreak of smallpox and the deaths which have occurred both in this country and in France, from infection from an able-bodied seaman from the Anchorliner s.s. *Tuscania*, who died in hospital at Marseilles draws attention both to the necessity for vaccination, and for the protection of the public from the unvaccinated.

The French authorities are taking efficient precautions, and until further notice, passengers landing in France, and not possessing a vaccination certificate not less than 10 days and not more than five years old, will require to fill up a sanitary passport (yellow card) to be obtained *en route*, and will be kept under observation in France for 14 days if necessary. Transit passengers will experience no difficulty.

It is also stated that M. Loucheur, Minister of Labour and Hygiene, hearing that a considerable number of passengers had arrived at Le Bourget, the air port of Paris, and that no precautions were being taken there against smallpox infection, decided that the same formalities were to be put into force at the aerodrome as have latterly been working smoothly at the sea ports.

We may be sure also that our own port sanitary authorities are exercising all vigilance, and all air travellers from India are now required to possess a certificate of recent vaccination.

#### NURSING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

In the House of Commons on April 17th Sir Robert Thomas (Member for Anglesey) asked the Minister of Health the number of private nursing homes in London, in the provinces, and in Wales, respectively; what were the regulations for the inspection and approval of these institutions by the local health authority prior to the admission of patients and subsequently; and how many inspections were carried out in each of the three groups mentioned above during the last 12 months to any convenient recent date.

Sir Kingsley Wood (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health) replied that the Nursing Homes Registration Act, 1927, came into operation on July 1st, 1928. Medical Officers of Health had been asked to include statistics of homes registered under the Act in their annual report for 1928, but those reports were not yet available. Premises within the scope of the Act were subject to the provisions of the Act and of bye-laws made under it by local supervising authorities. Those authorities were empowered to inspect nursing homes under Section 5 of the Act, but the Minister had no detailed information as to their exercise of that power.

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