

by one of the British representatives at the fourteenth congress of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning held in London last July, "Exact knowledge of where the people are, why they are there, whether the houses are unfit, overcrowded, or in need of reconditioning, whether they are tending to move somewhere else, and how they are living at present, what their incomes are, and so on, is essential if we are to avoid working in the dark."

PLAYING FIELDS A VITAL NECESSITY FOR HEALTH.

Mr. E. M. Dence, writing from the County Hall, London, to *The Times*, strongly deprecates the recommendation of the Housing and Public Health Committee of the London County Council, in connection with the housing problem in the East End of London, to take 30 out of 340 acres at Hackney Marsh, and the statement of the Committee that it is its intention "to give serious consideration to the question of reserving suitable areas for open spaces within the boundary of the county as additional compensation." He urges that Londoners "should resist by every lawful expedient the intention of the London County Council to take away a playing field which was handed to them as a sacred trust to protect," and asks with reason, "if to satisfy the design of sections 65 and 103 of the Housing Act of 1925, it is considered reasonable to substitute land five miles away at Chigwell (as has been suggested) what is to prevent similar action being decided upon for other London playing fields?"

ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION.

Abundant evidence was advanced at the Conference held at Bristol by the National Smoke Abatement Society last month, of the damage caused by atmospheric pollution.

A SURVEY OF THE CAUSES NEEDED.

Dr. R. Lessing, consultant chemist and chemical engineer speaking on atmospheric pollution in London, urged that a comprehensive survey of the causes of atmospheric pollution should be considered.

The various types of chimney emission, ranging from the small domestic fire to the largest power station boiler, should be examined and the chemical composition of the gases ascertained.

Whatever expenditure was incurred in preventing or reducing the pollution of air must be offset against the damage caused by its insidious action.

The damage suffered by the community amounted to probably not less than £1 a year per head of the urban population.

Again, in addition to pollution by smoke and acids, there was the nuisance of flue dust. This was not restricted to industrial furnaces. There was an increasing danger of an addition to atmospheric pollution by dust from the boilers installed for central heating and hot water supply in the various domestic buildings.

COUNTRYSIDE AFFECTED AS IF BY BLIGHT.

Dr. A. G. Ruston, lecturer and advisory economist to the Department of Agriculture, Leeds University, stated that, practically the whole of the countryside in South Lancashire and Yorkshire is visibly affected, as if by blight, by the smoke from millions of neighbouring factory and domestic chimneys.

"Experimental evidence goes to show," he said, "that one would not be very wide of the mark in stating that, as far as the householder is concerned, for every ton of coal he buys one cwt. goes up the chimney unconsumed; while as far as the factory is concerned there is at least a loss of one stone out of every ton of coal purchased.

In this way nearly 2½ million tons of soot escape annually into the area of this country in the form of smoke pollution. Of this a certain amount falls *in situ*, but the greater bulk

is blown away, polluting the atmosphere for miles around all over our great manufacturing and residential areas.

Smoke from industrial England has been observed as far away as Valencia Island, on the west coast of Ireland; the smoke drift of London is frequently seen by air pilots over the Channel and Northern France; a soot fringe on the edge of Coniston Water—derived from Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire—has been photographed by Professor Cohen; it has been alleged that the sheep on the Isle of Man turn darker in colour when an east wind blows across from Lancashire."

STANDARD MINIMUM RULES FOR THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.

The Howard League for Penal Reform have issued an appeal for the observation of the standard minimum rules of the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission, and say they have proof that these rules are far too often disregarded in practice. They ask (1) That the League of Nations should request all its member Governments to state categorically whether they accept the standard minimum rules as applying to all sane persons, whether convicted or not, held under any kind of arrest or detention by the State; (2) that all States which do accept the rules, wholly or in part, should be asked to publish them, with the details of their acceptance, as a Government publication in their own official language or languages. Also that the League of Nations should request the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission to extend the existing standard minimum rules so as to deal with such questions as imprisonment without trial.

The Howard League in an additional document give details in support of the statement that the standard minimum rules are disregarded, even by countries which have formally accepted them. The names of the States concerned are not given because, it is stated, experience has shown that to do so might bring further suffering on the prisoners; but all the instances given relate either to Europe, the United States of America, or the British Empire. The cases are given under the numbers of the rules of which they are alleged to be violations, and concern food, work, accommodation, and bedding, health and medical services, punishments, prison staff, religious services, and assistance of liberated prisoners. The most serious charges concern physical torture and ill-treatment of prisoners. In many countries, it is stated, corporal punishment is recklessly used and beating is common, both to obtain evidence and confession, and as a punishment by official order or at the whim of the prison officer.

FIRST AID IN CHEMICAL WARFARE.

The Course of Instruction in First Aid in Chemical Warfare for Trained Nurses, organised by the British Red Cross Society, is naturally arousing considerable interest.

The course consists of eight lectures and practical work followed by an examination for the Society's Certificate, beginning on Wednesday, November 13th, at 8 p.m., and continuing on Mondays and Wednesdays at the same hour. The examination will be held on Wednesday, December 11th, at 8 p.m., only those intending to take the full course are eligible to attend. Applications to attend should be made on the form obtainable for the purpose from 14, Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1, and such forms completed should reach that address not later than Saturday, October 12th.

QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S IMPERIAL MILITARY NURSING SERVICE.

Matron Miss G. F. V. Temperley, A.R.R.C., to be Principal Matron, September 23rd, 1935. Sister Miss H. M. Jones to be Matron, September 23rd, 1935.

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