

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

CHILDREN IN LONDON WELL FED.

The report of the School Medical Officer of the London County Council for 1935 shows that of more than 189,000 children examined in 1935 over 94 per cent. were satisfactorily nourished.

Of these about 77 per cent. showed normal nutrition and more than 17 per cent. were exceptionally well nourished. The remaining 5½ per cent. were under-nourished but only .08 per cent. (152 out of the 189,000 examined) showed definite pathological malnutrition.

The organisation of nutrition was a new departure during the year. The object of the centres is to investigate and assist cases of malnutrition in their earliest stages. These cases were formerly referred to hospitals, where they were frequently dismissed without treatment as they had no disease—a state of affairs unsatisfactory to all concerned which these new centres are designed to remedy.

Another innovation in 1935 was the regular weighing and measuring of all school children.

Hearing Tested.

Arrangements initiated in 1934 for testing the hearing of the school children by the gramophone audiometer have been systematically developed. More than 28,000 children were tested last year, of whom 7.8 per cent. failed and were examined by otologists to discover the cause of their defective hearing.

Many difficulties arise in dealing with the "maladjusted" child, and the report describes the endeavours made to solve this difficult social problem by organised "child guidance."

Dr. W. A. Scott undertook an investigation into the physique of athletic boys in elementary schools compared with that of their non-athletic classmates, and it was made clear that there is no significant difference between the two groups from the point of view of physical measurements.

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH SOCIAL HYGIENE COUNCIL COMMENDED BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH.

Sir Kingsley Wood (the Minister of Health), speaking on Wednesday, June 17th, at the annual meeting of the British Social Hygiene Council, at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, said that in this country the view had been taken in regard to the treatment of venereal disease that any element of compulsion was likely to defeat its own object. He believed that better results might be expected if the arrangements for treatment were based on the voluntary principle and the conditions under which treatment was provided were such as to encourage persons to make use of them. Treatment was, therefore, provided free, it was given under conditions of secrecy, and the treatment centres were open to all comers irrespective of their place of residence. Few people realised the economic loss to the country occasioned by the disease. It was impossible to give exact figures, but it was incontestable that the elimination of syphilis would mean the elimination of two diseases—general paralysis of the insane and locomotor ataxy. It also accounted for an important proportion of heart disease that killed through sudden death many between the ages of 30 and 60.

Results generally were improving, and an increasing number took advantage of the facilities for diagnosis now available. The incidence of syphilis was on the decline, while the mortality of infants certified as due to the disease in 1934 was less than one-half of what it was in 1924 and about one-sixth of that in 1917.

There were certain matters to which it was important renewed efforts should be directed. The number of women

attending the treatment centres would appear to be less than it should be. It was important to encourage those in charge of children who were unfortunately affected to bring them for observation and treatment to the centres. No new medical discovery was needed to rid the community of congenital syphilis. There was also need for the development of work in the rural areas.

Sir Kingsley Wood commended the excellent work the Council had done and was doing. Constant education and public enlightenment were necessary, and it was in this connection the work of the Council was so necessary and worthy of support.

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS.

RESCUE PARTIES AND CLEARANCE OF DEBRIS.

Under the above title the Air Raid Precautions Department of the Home Office has issued a Memorandum describing the organisation recommended for dealing with buildings and roads damaged by air attack. In England and Wales, the Memorandum states, it is desirable that the responsibility for highways outside county boroughs should be reviewed by each County Council with the borough and district councils in the County. A division of responsibility can then be arranged so as to make the best use of available facilities for the benefit of the county as a whole. In the County of London the responsibility will rest on the metropolitan borough councils.

In Part I of the Memorandum suggestions are made for the organisation and equipment of rescue parties to release persons trapped in damaged buildings. It is suggested that these parties should consist of either six or eight men (including a skilled foreman) according to the type of equipment provided.

A section of the Memorandum is devoted to the risk of flooding and occupants of property liable to flooding in the event of air attack are warned against taking refuge in basements or ground floor rooms.

THE PAPWORTH VILLAGE SETTLEMENT.

The Duke of Kent, on June 16th, paid a visit to the Papworth Village Settlement, near Cambridge, of which he is President, where he was received by the Medical Director, Sir Pendrill Varrier-Jones, and immediately began an inspection of the medical departments, including the Bernhard Baron Memorial Hospital for Men, The Princess Hospital for Women, and the new Surgical Hospital which has yet to be formally opened.

After luncheon His Royal Highness made a tour of the industries where patients and ex-patients from the Papworth Hospitals are employed, and lastly the site of the new Home for tuberculous nurses of which the foundation-stone was laid on June 16th.

The Duke of Kent expressed himself more than pleased with the progress made and commended all concerned in the development of the scheme.

The Home for tuberculous nurses, was, said Alderman Mrs. Keynes, who introduced the Minister of Health, Sir Kingsley Wood, on the occasion of the stone-laying, devised by the Matron, Miss Borne, on account of the urgent need of nurses who had lost their health. The scheme had been welcomed by the nursing profession, and there was a steady waiting list for admission.

The Minister of Health in the course of his speech said that since 1930 Papworth had found it possible to employ some nurses who had originally come to the settlement as patients, either in the wards, or in the industries, under sheltered conditions, during the critical years following discharge from the sanatorium; and the idea of the present scheme was to offer the same opportunity to a larger number of nurses.

We wish the scheme all success.

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