

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF TUBERCULOSIS.

Sir Kingsley Wood, the Minister of Health, inaugurated the 22nd Annual Conference of the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis at the County Hall, London.

Sir Kingsley Wood said King George V was Patron of the Association and His Patronage was no mere conventional thing. He never grudged his support to any movement inspired by his own high ideal of service and his inspiration would always remain with them in their work. It was King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, who held a meeting in Marlborough House at which the Association was founded.

In the fight against Tuberculosis, great progress had been made. For the first time on record the total number of deaths in England and Wales from all forms of tuberculosis fell in 1935 below 30,000. The standardised death rate from tuberculosis per million had fallen from 1,915 to 687 in less than 40 years. This striking record of progress was due in the first place to remarkable improvements in methods of treatment. Much also was due to the example given by the establishment, as a result of greater knowledge and active propaganda, of voluntary sanatoria and dispensaries. It was significant that no sanatorium in the modern sense existed in this country before 1898.

Improved standards of living and hygiene, better housing, better nutrition, purer milk supply and general public health measures had played and would continue to play a considerable part in the attack upon this disease.

But there were many opportunities for further advance. There was a great need for encouraging those who were suffering or suspected to be suffering from tuberculosis to take advantage at the earliest possible stage of the facilities provided for diagnosis and treatment. It was a regrettable fact that of the total number of some 59,000 new cases of tuberculosis reported in England and Wales in 1935, some 5 per cent. became known only after death had occurred. More should be done for the protection of adolescents and young adults. The decline in the tuberculosis statistics among young women between the ages of 15 and 25 had been comparatively slight and the decline among males of the same age, though considerable, had been less than at other ages.

The importance also of eliminating tuberculous cattle from the herds of this country was obviously very great. Bovine tuberculosis was responsible in Great Britain for a large number of deaths, probably more than 2,500 per annum, and for a still larger amount of serious illness. Much remained to be done before we could be satisfied that the whole of our milk supply was safe, and he had no doubt that local authorities, in cordial co-operation with producers and distributors, would press forward vigorously with this important work.

FRACTURES COMMITTEE.

The first meeting of the Committee on the Rehabilitation of Persons Injured by Accidents, which has been set up by the Home Secretary, the Minister of Health, and the Secretary of State for Scotland, was held on June 18th, 1936, under the chairmanship of Sir Malcolm Delevingne, K.C.B., K.C.V.O.

After hearing a statement by Dr. Carnwath on behalf of the Ministry of Health, the Committee discussed the procedure to be followed in its inquiry, and decided in the first instance to consider the question of the arrangements for the treatment of fractures.

Films illustrating modern methods of treatment of

fractures, and the results obtained in the early restoration of working capacity, were shown to the Committee by Mr. Watson Jones, of the Liverpool Royal Infirmary, and Mr. Pridie of the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held in the autumn.

EYES AND INDUSTRY—OPHTHALMIC BOARD'S SURVEY.

The first large-scale investigation into the action taken by industrial organisations to conserve the sight of workers has just been concluded by the National Ophthalmic Treatment Board.

While employers as a whole now recognise that the health of their workers has an important bearing upon efficiency, says the Board's Report, few have yet realised that a high standard of competence is dependent upon good sight. The survey "reveals the need for a further scientific investigation to determine the value to industry of systematic medical care of the sight of operatives."

Over 400 leading firms, covering nearly the whole field of industry and employing more than a million hands, provided the material for the inquiry. Of these, only 68 firms required workers to undergo an eye examination before engagement.

Foremost in this group came transport undertakings, manufacturers of tobacco, food and chemicals, and some firms in the textile, dyeing, and public utility concerns.

In the printing, light engineering, and clothing trades—occupations involving abnormal eyestrain—it is surprising to find that employers are not "more conscious of the advisability of their workers either possessing good sight or being required to take steps to ensure that their work will not suffer from any visual defect that may exist."

Wearing of glasses is not generally regarded as a disadvantage by employers, and several firms help their workers in the matter of eye examination and the provision of spectacles when necessary.

HOURS OF INSTITUTIONAL WORKERS.

Action required in regard to Hospitals, Private Mental Hospitals and Nursing Homes.

On behalf of the Minister of Health, Sir George Chrystal, the Secretary to the Ministry, received recently a deputation from the T.U.C. General Council and the Unions representing workers in hospitals and other institutions. Mr. W. Kean introduced the deputation and asked for the sympathetic consideration of the Minister for the Resolution carried by the Margate Congress in favour of a 48-hour week for institutional workers together with one day's rest in seven with pay.

Mr. Gibson referred to conditions at existing institutions, and asked that the Minister would consider a circular to local authorities urging the desirability of limiting hours of institutional workers to 48 hours per week. The deputation appreciated that hospitals could not be run with a rigid time-table, but they were strongly opposed to a spread-over system. He also asked that the Board of Control should take action with regard to private mental hospitals, and urged closer inspection of private nursing homes where the staff sleep on the premises. Regarding voluntary hospitals, he said that any lead given by the Ministry would assist by strengthening public opinion. Other members of the deputation supplemented Mr. Gibson's points.

Sir George Chrystal said that the Minister was in entire sympathy with the object of endeavouring to prevent excessive hours of work by nurses and so securing the efficiency of hospital services. There had been, he was glad to say, a great improvement in recent years in this

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