

we want to know about the blind is not how much more or less intelligent they might have been if they had been able to see, but how the intelligence they actually possess may best be developed."

In an appendix on physical education, stress is laid on the importance of yet further developing the many out-of-door activities in which young blind people take part to-day. The investigators urge the need for opportunities to be given to blind children to meet seeing children on a social footing, not only for conversation and the exchange of ideas, but also in camping, hiking, swimming, rowing and for the active comradeship of such games as those in which the sightless can take part.

OPHTHALMIC EXHIBITION OPENED BY SIR KINGSLEY WOOD.

Sir Kingsley Wood, the Minister of Health, opened the Exhibition of Ophthalmic Goods and Equipment, held recently at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster. Speaking at the luncheon, Sir Kingsley Wood said we lived in an age when, with the extension of the average length of life, the assistance of optical appliances was indispensable to many. Though the total amount of eye deficiency showed little sign of abating we could claim to have succeeded to some extent in shifting the incidence to the later years of life. Much was being done to-day in the prevention of blindness, particularly in relation to blindness due to inflammatory conditions in the eye in infancy. Many members of the community spent their lives in workshops, offices and factories, and there was considerable necessity, in their cases particularly, for adequate and efficient aids to eyesight.

PROGRESS OF BRITISH SPECTACLE LENS INDUSTRY.

Considerable progress had been made in the British spectacle lens industry. Prior to the war some 90 per cent. of the spectacle lenses used in this country were of foreign manufacture. Improved types of lenses had been introduced here, and output had so increased that at the present time probably only 25 per cent. of the home requirements were imported. It was estimated that the numbers of workers in the industry had doubled since 1921. During 1934 British manufacturers produced some 553,000 spectacles and pince-nez, compared with 478,000 in 1930. Since 1932 there had been further expansion in the home industry, due, amongst other things, to the transfer to this country of important foreign producers who had set up factories here, in view of the protection afforded to British manufacturers.

OPHTHALMIC BENEFIT FOR TEN MILLION INSURED PERSONS.

So far as the service given to insured persons under ophthalmic benefit was concerned, this was now being provided by no less than 4,900 Approved Societies and branches in England and Wales, with a total membership of over ten million insured persons. The aggregate amount available for this benefit was over £500,000 per annum.

OPTICIANS' FEES.

On the question of the payment of fees for services rendered by opticians in connection with the supply of glasses to insured persons, Sir Kingsley Wood said he would like to take the opportunity of stating that it was and had always been his intention to provide for this in the new Regulations now before Parliament, and an examination was being made to see that the wording of the Regulations gave effect to that intention.

PROFESSIONAL REVIEW.

AN ETHIOPIAN DIARY.*

The appearance of "An Ethiopian Diary," a record of the British Ambulance Service in Ethiopia, is well timed, while the memory is still fresh of the war of aggression which has added Abyssinia to the Italian possessions and made Italy once more an Empire. The author, Mr. J. W. S. Macfie, tells his story simply, leaving it to another to write later the official account of the work of the British Ambulance Service in Ethiopia which ended, so tragically, with the death of Dr. Melly, its commanding officer, who was shot through the chest when he had gone out in Addis Ababa during the riots with Dr. Gatward with one of the lorries to pick up the wounded, and who died two days later at the British Legation.

"Since returning to Europe," says the author, "I have been asked again and again if I thought our efforts to assist the Ethiopian wounded and sick were appreciated. I must say I doubt it. The soldiers and the country folk were willing enough to take advantage of our services, but often we felt that they thought we were working somehow for our own advantage. We were to them foreigners, and perhaps they only dimly distinguished between us who were trying to help them, and those others who were fighting against them.

"We all had the deepest sympathy for them, we admired their courage and their brave independence. We wanted so much to help them. But it was certainly a disillusionment to discover, as we did quite early, that even in the face of national disaster they were not a united people. They were firmly convinced that their own ways were best. Perhaps they were right. Perhaps it is best that all peoples should be left to work out their own systems unaided, or with a minimum of interference. But for us, trying as we were to bring to them what we believed they needed desperately, the benefits of western medicine, their conservatism was often exasperating. They were difficult to help, now and then we felt undoubtedly that ours was the old reward, 'the blame of those ye better, the hate of those ye guard.'"

A subject to which the author refers at some length in his introduction is that of "gas," of which he writes:—

"I understand that before the Ethiopian war 'gas' had not been used, or had only been tried tentatively in the manner it was employed by the Italians, that is by dropping it in bombs, or by spraying it from aeroplanes. I have attempted to describe the physical and moral effects of 'gas' on the Ethiopians, but without much success. They were indeed terrible. The Ethiopians are remarkably brave and hardy. . . . While it was new it was terrifying and demoralising. I am not convinced that our own people would be immune from panic under similar circumstances. At present they have absolutely no idea of the horror of this new method of attack, and not the most elementary knowledge of how to meet it."

The diary proper begins with November 13th, 1935, when the Unit first appeared in concrete form and assembled at St. Thomas' Hospital together with all their Bedford lorries, and after a short introductory speech by Sir Arthur Stanley, was blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Three days later the medical officers, with Dr. Melly, the Commanding Officer, set sail on the P. & O. s.s. *Rampura*, and the same day the warrant officers, the lorries, and equipment sailed in charge of Captain Dobinson on board the s.s. *Soudan*.

It was decided, by the wish of the Emperor, that the hospital should work in the northern area and it, therefore,

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