

**THE FIGHT AGAINST CRIPPLING DISEASE.**

Mr. Robert Bernays, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, recently attended the Annual Meeting and Founder's Day of the Royal Cripples Hospital, Birmingham.

He congratulated the Hospital on its valuable work in Birmingham and surrounding districts.

Much was being done throughout the country, he said, to eliminate the living conditions which give rise to crippling disease. The infant welfare service was of primary importance and in this realm Birmingham's high standard was being maintained. School children were being provided with milk and every effort was being made to see that it was free from infection. The improvement of housing conditions and the abolition of slums was another side of the same struggle, and Mr. Bernays complimented Birmingham on the progress of their slum clearance programme and the energy with which they were building new houses. "The Corporation," he said, "are proposing to build a further 5,000 houses a year for the next five years."

It was, however, still necessary to provide skilled treatment in institutions specially designed and equipped for the purpose to try to achieve a cure where preventive measures had not been successful. In this work the Royal Cripples Hospital had played an eminent and also a pioneer part. That this effort had not been without success was shown by the remarkable fall in the number of deaths due to tuberculosis of the bones and joints. In 1927, 109 children had died in England and Wales from this cause; in 1937, the number was only 44.

Local authorities had extensive powers and duties with regard to both tubercular and non-tubercular cripples, but there was enormous scope also for the voluntary orthopaedic institution. The Royal Cripples Hospital offered in- and out-patient facilities not only to Birmingham itself, but to neighbouring towns like Dudley, Redditch, Stourbridge and Walsall. It did not, moreover, confine its activities to actual treatment, but provided training in handicrafts and other occupations and so helped to make its patients useful and happy members of society. "The value of the Hospital's work," Mr. Bernays said, "over so many years for cripples in Birmingham and outlying areas cannot be over-estimated." He wished it every success in its plans for extending and modernising its accommodation.

After referring to the forthcoming World Conference of Workers for Cripples to be held in July, under the patronage of the Queen, Mr. Bernays emphasised the continued need of the voluntary organisation. "The closer I approach the social services," he said, "the more convinced I am of their dependence for success on voluntary effort."

**LONDON SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE HEALTHIER.  
Doctor Reports Sudden and Unmistakable Improvement.**

London school children are becoming heavier and taller, according to Dr. H. C. Corry Mann, the nutrition expert.

"There had been a recent improvement in physique which has been sudden and quite unmistakable," he told members of the Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene Congress, at Hastings on Wednesday (May 24th). "I believe that the regular ration of safe, pasteurised milk in the schools has been the chief cause of the higher standard."

"During the past two years there have been definite indications that the disparity in weight between the public schoolboy and the elementary schoolboy at the age of 14 is less marked. The latter, at the leaving age, is now about 10 lb. heavier than was the elementary schoolboy of 1910. The improvement has also shown itself in greater height and thicker bones."

"I am convinced that the educational authorities will be astounded by the further immense improvement in nutrition among children of the school age when the present inadequate milk ration of seven ounces is increased to the necessary ration of one pint of pasteurised milk daily."

**Encouraging the Milk Habit.**

Criticism of people who tried to encourage children to drink milk by instructing them in its vitamin content was made at the Congress by Mr. P. B. Tustin, technical adviser to United Dairies, Ltd.

"Do not give children long lectures on nutrition," he said. "Tell them about the famous athletes and film stars who drink milk. It is not much use explaining to them about the calories and vitamins in milk—tell them that Gene Tunney drank quarts of milk a day; that is the kind of propaganda which they will understand."

Referring to the importance of adequate diets for growing children, Mr. Tustin added: "If parents paid as much attention to their children's food as do racehorse trainers to the diets of their charges, we should see a big improvement in the standard of nutrition."

"Before the coming of the white man tuberculosis was unknown to the native," declares Dr. B. A. Dormer, medical superintendent of the King George Government Hospital at Springfield, Natal.

**COLD VACCINES:**

In a carefully controlled study of the value of three different vaccines which are recommended for the prevention of colds the subjects were cold-susceptible students of the University of Minnesota.

A "control group" was observed during each year of the study. Such groups were chosen at random from the students who applied for cold prevention treatment; the members were treated in exactly the same manner as those of the vaccinated group, and they believed throughout the period of the experiment that they were receiving vaccine. Sterile physiologic solution of sodium chloride was administered hypodermically as a control for the subcutaneously administered vaccine and lactose filled capsules as a control for the vaccines administered orally.

One of the most significant aspects of this study is the great reduction in the number of colds which the members of the control groups reported during the experimental period as compared to the number that the same students reported for the previous year. In fact, these results were as good as many of those reported in uncontrolled studies which recommend the use of cold vaccines.

The group which received vaccine subcutaneously experienced an average of 25 per cent. less colds per person than did the control group. This difference occurred during both years of the study and is statistically significant. Practically, however, it is of little or no importance, because a reduction of 25 per cent. in the average number of colds in a group of individuals is not sufficiently great to justify the time and expense involved in carrying out the intensive vaccination procedure which was utilised.

The group which received the polyvalent vaccine administered orally, experienced just as many colds as the control group during both years of the study.

The results reported by the students who took Rosenow's streptococcus vaccine parallel exactly those reported for the control group.

Although the data are not entirely conclusive, there is no evidence in this study either that vaccines reduce the complications of colds or that the condition of the nose and throat is related to the frequency of colds in a cold-susceptible group.—H. S. Diehl, M.D., *American Journal of Nursing*.

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