

## THE CANTOR LECTURE.

### THE COMMON COLD.

The Cantor Lecture at the Royal Society of Arts was given by Dr. F. C. Andrews, M.D., F.R.S. His subject was the "Common Cold." A subject of great interest to everyone, it upsets each one of us in turn, at one time or another.

Dr. Andrews is in charge of the research unit at the Harvard Hospital, Salisbury, where the Ministry of Health is carrying out research into the causes and possible cure of the Common Cold.

The lecturer started by telling us some of the difficulties with which they are faced in this work. The virus which is the cause of the trouble is very difficult to isolate. It is one of a very large group of unknown viruses which cause many types of infection in the upper respiratory tract. When isolated, by filtering nasal washings, the virus is implanted into the yolk sac of a chick embryo. But so far the efforts to culture it over a period of time have not been very successful, although the American research workers claim to have done this. Another great difficulty is the lack of animals suitable for laboratory experimental work. The chimpanzee is the only known animal which is affected by the Common Cold in the same way as man. This animal is not, however, at all suitable for this type of experiment, being difficult to handle as well as being expensive and hard to get. Human volunteers are therefore the only possible research material. Many have come forward; up to 500 have been through the unit at Salisbury in the last two years. Many more have volunteered. Dr. Andrews then showed us some slides of the unit at the Harvard Hospital. The huts which house the volunteers during the period of isolation and infection look extremely comfortable. The volunteers remain in the unit for 10 days.

He next dealt with the mode by which infection is spread. There seems little doubt that the virus is carried in the air, and thus may be classed as an airborne infection. Though it does seem as if chills helped to increase the susceptibility to the attack, all the known evidence points to transference of infection from person to person. Certain it is that colds may be caught at any time of the year.

He stressed the great spread of infection from handkerchiefs. "These," he said, "were waved about more when the infection was at its worst, and the handkerchief sodden with the germs." A new method of impregnating handkerchiefs with a chemical which would kill off at least 90 per cent. of the germs was now being tried out. The chemical, which is expected to withstand two or three launderings, is not yet available. The preparation of a vaccine is probable in the near future. Work in that direction is progressing very favourably. There is as yet no "cure" and only a very uncertain chance of acquiring immunity.

The very interesting lecture was concluded with an invitation to all the over-twenties and the under-forties to spend 10 days in the Salisbury unit at the expense of the Ministry of Health to aid the cause of science, and help to overcome a potent common enemy.

U. SPON.

## REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF NURSES.

### The Views of a Public Health Nurse.

The long awaited report of the Working Party on the Recruitment and Training of Nurses has at last appeared and should be of absorbing interest to every member of the Nursing Profession.

The Working Party was appointed in January, 1946, under the chairmanship of Sir Robert Wood, K.B.E., C.B., to review the position of the Nursing Profession in view of the imminent establishment of a National Health Service. The survey was to cover the whole field of Recruitment and Training of Nurses. As it consists of over 100 pages, it is obvious that it cannot be discussed adequately at the present stage; but, briefly, its main purpose was to examine such questions as:—

- (a) What is the proper task of a nurse?
- (b) What training is required to equip her for that task?
- (c) What annual intake is needed and how can it be obtained?
- (d) From what groups of the population recruitment should be made?
- (e) How can wastage during training be minimised?

The object was not to formulate interim proposals to palliate the present difficulties, but rather to assess if possible what nursing force in terms of quantity and quality is likely to be required in the future for the new National Health Service and suggest how best that force could be recruited, trained and deployed.

The Report falls into two main sections. The first section, after outlining the method of approach adopted by the Working Party, deals with the profession as it is at present, its size, structure, intake and wastage of both trained and student nurses. The second deals with the question of training and sets out suggestions for a revised system and for the administrative machinery suggested to bring it into effect.

The Working Party approach is remarkably free from preconceptions and prejudices, and it must be said it has made a valuable contribution to the problem.

Exhaustive investigations have formed the basis of its findings. Its fundamental argument is that nursing shortage is due not to lack of recruits but to wastage during training. This is true; but it must be remembered that its evidence was collected at a highly abnormal time, when, owing to the war, many girls took up nursing to evade other forms of National Service, to abandon it at the first opportunity, and when there was also a severe shortage of domestic staff, so that the nurses had either to do the work themselves or close the hospital. Again, was it wise to pay so much attention to the opinions of the "misfits," some of whose approach to the profession was, to say the least, far from laudable, and many of whom must have been the type to try everything by turn and nothing long? The main recommendations are that the nurse should receive full Student Status; that she should receive two years' training, the first 18 months of which would be devoted to the "fundamentals common to all fields of nursing," and the remainder to "concentrated study and training in a chosen field." At the end of two years, having passed the necessary tests and examinations, she should qualify as S.R.N. with appropriate pay and status, but will not be allowed to practise privately, nor to be on her own until she has completed satisfactorily a further year's work under supervision, after which she will be regarded as proficient and licensed to practise. Other important recommendations are: The eight-hour day;

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