

recently manured. But part of the pollution is almost certainly due to domestic sewage. The river for many miles above the intake of the town's supply runs through land used for agricultural purposes, and several villages and numerous isolated houses exist within the watershed. The Professors go on to describe the risks of contaminated water of this kind, stating that while *Bacillus coli* in itself is not specially dangerous, it may, in so far as it is of human origin, be at any time accompanied by highly dangerous organisms, such as those of typhoid fever or cholera. Experience elsewhere has repeatedly shown that a community may have continued for years to drink, with apparent impunity, a water subject to domestic contamination, and then with explosive suddenness a serious epidemic of typhoid fever or cholera has arisen from the entrance of the special organisms from the same source. They have examined the sources of pollution, and are satisfied that it is not practicable to guard effectually against dangerous pollution at all these points and at all times. From a consideration of all these circumstances and results they have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that the water supply of the city in its present condition is dangerous, and that steps should be taken either to filter the water or to obtain a supply from a source not open to domestic pollution. Filtration of the present supply is in any case advisable in order to remove the turbidity which is so frequently observed after wet weather.

## England and Wales.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

### WALES.

#### DIPHTHERIA IN FLINTSHIRE.

FOR some time past diphtheria has been prevalent in the Holywell rural district in Flintshire. The district is large and has a population of about 24,000 persons, so that there ought not to be any great difficulty in dealing with an outbreak of this disease upon modern lines and in accordance with present-day ideas. There appears, however, to be an initial difficulty in doing so, in the fact that the members of the sanitary authority try to make themselves and others believe that the cases which are reported to the medical officers of health are not really diphtheria, one member of the council at a recent meeting expressing the opinion that the "mistake was the half-crown fee for notification." At the same meeting several others argued that a distinction should be made between sore throat and diphtheria, one member, a lady, remarking oracularly, "diphtheritic sore throat has a high temperature whereas diphtheria has a low temperature." The medical officer of health, in reporting upon a particular outbreak—including one case at the school house—recommended that the schools should be closed until the structural alterations to the outhouses mentioned in his special report of January last be completed, as the present condition of affairs was dangerous to health. He added that if there had been the means of isolating the first cases the epidemic would have been stamped out at the beginning. At another meeting of the same council the medical officer of health reported that there was much sickness among the school children in one part of the district, which he attributed to large accumulations of filth at houses, due to imperfect scavenging. The conditions he had found were a discredit to the sanitary authority. It may be well to remind the district council that insanitary conditions and the ill-health resulting from them will not be remedied by making disparaging remarks of the medical practitioners in the locality; some good may be achieved if more attention is paid to the statutory duties cast upon the authority by the Legislature.

### BIRMINGHAM.

#### HOMES FOR EPILEPTICS AND FEEBLE MINDED.

A COLONY for epileptics and feeble-minded persons has been established at King's Heath by the guardians of the parish of Birmingham and the Aston and King's Norton

unions. The representatives of these three Boards acquired Monyhull Hall and other buildings, together with 185 acres of freehold land, and on this estate six houses, a laundry, a general kitchen block, and a cottage for the head attendant have been built. Monyhull Hall has been altered to provide for administrative quarters and adapted as a residence for the matron and female staff, and as an office, dispensary, and stores accommodation. The houses at the colony provide for 216 persons, who will be able to work on the land which forms part of the estate, in the laundry, and in carpenters', fitters', and other workshops. The accommodation will be divided as follows: Birmingham 110, Aston 50, and King's Norton 50; children under 16 years, and persons over 45 will be excluded. The new buildings comprise three homes for men and three for women, and each will hold thirty-six inmates. Four of the homes are single-storied buildings, the others have two stories. Though constructed of the plainest materials yet the outward appearance is pleasing. The large dormitories are commanded by rooms which give the attendants a perfect survey of the sleeping chambers. In the two-storied buildings arrangements have been made to afford similar means of effective supervision of the dining and sitting rooms. The purchase of the estate for the colony cost £20,600, and the homes and other buildings and workshops which have been erected have been estimated to cost about £30,000.

### LEICESTER.

#### THE NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS ACT.

AT the last quarterly meeting of the Leicester Town Council the question of adopting the Notification of Births Act, 1907, came up for discussion. A minute of the Sanitary Committee recommended that the Act be not adopted, in view of an offer made by the local medical men voluntarily to notify cases in which they thought the services of a health visitor might be of use. This minute was opposed, and an amendment, referring it back, was moved and ultimately carried by a small majority after a lively discussion. The arguments centred round the questions of the non-payment of a fee and the breach of professional secrecy involved, and incidentally revealed some very interesting aspects of what may be called "the municipal mind." Thus, the alderman who moved the amendment stated that the duty imposed by the Act involved "practically no labour or risk," and proceeded to enunciate the incontrovertible but charmingly irrelevant dictum, that "If every one who was called upon to comply with certain regulations wanted a fee the public outlay would be much greater than it is!" Another member based his support of the Act on the ground that medical men were only in attendance in a very small percentage of cases, which we had believed to be one of the strongest arguments for so amending the Act as to exclude the profession. Yet another could not see "why there should be any secrecy at all!" and so on.

### MANCHESTER AND SALFORD.

#### THE BRANCH COUNCIL AND ORGANIZATION.

IT is generally felt that in the formation of a Standing Committee on Divisional and Branch Organization and Finance the Lancashire and Cheshire Branch Council has taken a step in the right direction. The Branch, with its 30 Divisions and about 1,640 members, is one of the largest in the kingdom, being only second to the Metropolitan Counties Branch, and few will be found able to devote the time, energy, and ability displayed by the late honorary secretary, now the President, and the present honorary secretary to the work of organization. How great that work has been is only now being realized, as the new Standing Committee has got fairly to work. The first business of the Committee has been to analyse and scrutinize the annual reports sent in by the Divisions, and a tabular statement has been prepared from which it is possible at a glance to see the financial position, and to some extent the work done by each Division. The value of this as an incentive to all Divisions must be obvious. Without entering into details, one fact which has come out will be something of a sur-

prise; it is often stated that the attendance at meetings of Divisions throughout the country is only about 10 per cent. of the members, but it is found that it is actually over 17 per cent. taking one Division with another in the Lancashire and Cheshire Branch. At the suggestion of the Committee, the Honorary Secretary of the Branch has sent round to the Divisions a circular letter containing the Committee's hints and suggestions for drawing up the Divisional reports, and a statement of the manner in which grants will be made to the Divisions by the Branch Council. To stimulate interest in the work of the Branch it is suggested that representatives of Divisions on the Branch Council should regularly report to their Divisions any resolutions of importance or interest passed by the council, and that Divisions should regularly place on the agenda paper of their meetings the item "Report of Representative on Branch Council." Divisions are further reminded of the importance of adopting ethical rules, and are advised that if they wish to deal with any question connected with contract practice they should, before doing so, adopt the Bradford rules or some modification thereof suitable to the conditions of practice in their respective areas. The Committee is finding as time goes on a very large scope of legitimate activity in co-ordinating the Divisions.

### WEST YORKSHIRE.

#### BRADFORD MEDICAL MEN AND TRAMWAYS ACCIDENTS.

THE Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and General Manager of the Bradford Tramways recently invited the honorary secretaries of the Bradford Division, B.M.A., to discuss informally with them the question of medical fees in cases of tramway accidents in Bradford. A meeting took place on April 13th, and the Chairman of the Tramways Committee suggested that an endeavour should be made to obtain more general uniformity in medical charges than had hitherto obtained. Some medical men would only charge 5s. when called out to a tramway accident, and others for the same class of case would charge a guinea. It was suggested that some arrangement such as has been made between the profession and the Watch Committee in regard to street accidents—namely, a 5s. fee during the day and 10s. at night—might be adopted. The Tramways Committee, although they did not hold themselves responsible for every accident occurring on the system, were yet quite willing to pay the necessary medical charges in all cases if some definite arrangement could be made with the profession. It was pointed out to the representatives of the committee that it was a very difficult matter to arrange specific fees on account of the great variety of the cases to which the doctors were called. Very often a medical man had to rush away from his house to an accident when his surgery was full of patients, and a small fee did not then adequately compensate him for the disturbance in his work. In the case of street accidents, it was pointed out that formerly no one was liable for the medical fee, and consequently it suited the profession very well to have an arrangement with the Watch Committee on the question. But in the case of tramway accidents, in the bulk of cases there was undoubtedly a legal liability which allowed the surgeon some latitude in his charges. The honorary secretaries, however, promised to bring the question before a general meeting of the Division for discussion, and see whether a *modus vivendi* would be possible. At the same time, they cordially thanked the Tramways Committee for communicating with the Division before taking any action on the question. Many disputes between the local profession and the governing bodies which had occurred during recent years might have been amicably settled at the very outset if similar action to that taken in this case had been arranged.

### NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

#### NEWCASTLE AND NORTHUMBERLAND SANATORIUM.

THE Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Northumberland Sanatorium, Barrasford, Northumberland, was opened in May, 1907, and the first report was issued recently. The Committee of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Northumberland Branch of the National Association for the Prevention of

Consumption resolved in March, 1902, to provide a sanatorium for the district and selected a site of 60 acres of moorland and woodland at Barrasford 650 ft. above sea level. The sanatorium has accommodation for fifty patients with an administrative block capable of serving 100 patients if it should later on be decided to increase the beds to this number. During 1907 the patients numbered 49; of these 24 remained in residence on December 31st, and 25 had been discharged. It is worthy of note that of the patients admitted nearly 70 per cent. had both lungs involved and that 70 per cent. also were febrile cases. Thus, the cases included a large proportion in whom the disease was beyond the stage when treatment should be commenced if the most favourable results are to be expected. The sanatorium has been open too short a time for any record of results to be published, but in all but 4 cases the patients showed improvement during their stay in the institution; 4 patients have died since their return home. The committee is to be congratulated upon having brought its labours to a satisfactory conclusion, in that the sanatorium commences its active work practically free from debt. The maintenance is, however, a large expense, which is not entirely covered by the contributions of the patients.

## Hong Kong.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.]

#### ROYAL SANITARY INSTITUTE.

THE Governor, accompanied by Lady Lugard, presided at the annual distribution of prizes of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Sanitary Institute held on February 5th. Dr. Atkinson, President of the Hong Kong Branch, reviewed the work accomplished by the branch since its formation five years ago. The first lecture in connexion with this movement was given at Queen's College on January 13th, 1903. Since then a regular winter course had been held; up to the end of January 209 lectures had been delivered, the attendants at which numbered 2,441, giving an average of 16.46 per lecture. In addition to the lectures many practical demonstrations had been given at the cattle dépôt and slaughter-houses, Kennedy Town, by Mr. Gibson, and at the disinfecting station by Drs. Clark and Pearse. Visits have been paid to water-works and to new buildings in course of construction, and lectures given on engineering and medical subjects, and on food inspection. The practical sanitary science examination was for those who had no intention of becoming sanitary officers yet desired to obtain from the Institute a certificate indicating their knowledge of sanitary science. The branch was now self-supporting. Generally speaking, the work of the Institute had been well supported and the local branch had done good work, judging by the fact that thirty-six certificates had been gained since the starting of the movement. At the request of Dr. Atkinson, the Governor then presented the prizes. His Excellency, at the conclusion of the presentation, said the branch was instituted in 1903 on the suggestion of Mr. Carter, and it took shape owing to the energy and organizing ability of its president, Dr. Atkinson, and of various other members of the body of examiners. He thought that the value of an institution like that, affiliated to a great institution in England, was immense. The certificates could be obtained there, and were recognized throughout the British Empire. The Hong Kong Branch had led the way in adopting that great principle of affiliation with institutions in England which was of the greatest advantage to the Colonies. It was the principle upon which the Hong Kong College of Medicine intended to frame its future; and it was, as Dr. Atkinson said, the principle which he hoped would find still further expression in the Hong Kong University of the future. The Governor went on to say that it was the business of the gentlemen who had gained certificates there to endeavour to impress upon the Chinese community the value of sanitation, and to try to get them to work with them. They wished to make the Chinese gentlemen of intelligence and standing co-operate with them in the work of sanitation. They wished to get them to show the right way to put a stop, for instance, to