

should, to such extent as he might find convenient and subject to the instructions and administrative control of the Corporation, act as consulting tuberculosis officer in relation to the dispensary and as consulting physician at the Royal Victoria Hospital and farm colony as long as he holds his appointment as consultant. It may be difficult to adjust the various duties and responsibilities in so complicated and so novel a scheme as that which is under consideration by the Town Council of Edinburgh and its Public Health Committee; but there is surely, in the circumstances, a need for so great a degree of elasticity in the official relationships involved as shall retain Sir Robert Philip's services in the institutions he has done so much to found and carry on.

DR. W. T. GRENFELL OF LABRADOR IN EDINBURGH.

"Grenfell of Labrador," as he is now called—the M.D. of Oxford, and even the C.M.G. of 1906, being tacitly omitted for the more geographical and no less honourable appellation—gave two lectures in Edinburgh last week. On March 25th he gave a lecture to the members of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society on The Lure of Labrador, and pleaded for the development of that country as a great source of reindeer meat. Dr. Grenfell spoke also of his twenty-two years' experiences in Labrador, and mentioned that they had wireless telegraphy at three hospitals in that country. On the evening of March 26th he gave a popular lecture entitled Mid Snow and Ice in Labrador, and described further the work at the hospital stations which he and his colleagues, including Dr. Grieve, an Edinburgh medical man, were carrying on; much of it was made possible by the generosity of the late Lord Strathcona. The Rev. Dr. Kelman, in moving a vote of thanks to Dr. Grenfell, spoke of the lecturer and of Livingstone as medical men who carried through the cold of Labrador or the heat of Africa the same simple splendid message of love. Sir Alexander Simpson presided.

Ireland.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL, BELFAST.

THE annual meeting of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, was held in the hospital on March 26th. Mr. R. C. Macrory presided. Mr. R. J. Johnstone, honorary secretary of the medical staff, moved the adoption of its report; he drew attention to the work of the hospital, both in the treatment of disease and also in the training of students. The special departments did as much work as the special hospitals in the town. Sir William Whitla, chairman of the medical staff, seconded, and said he desired on behalf of his colleagues to thank the Board of Management for their generosity in granting every request formulated by the medical and surgical staff for the better equipment of the hospital. On the motion of Sir John Byers, a vote of thanks to the Press was adopted.

DUBLIN HOSPITAL SUNDAY FUND.

The council of the Dublin Hospital Sunday Fund, in its fortieth annual report, states that collections were made on November 10th, 1913, in 284 places of worship. Eight congregations which had made collections the previous year did not join, and two new congregations sent contributions. The amount collected was £3,301 12s. 4d., being a decrease of £47 5s. 9d. as compared with 1912. The expenses amounted to £233 4s. 10d., or 7.05 per cent. on the total sum collected. With balance from last year there was a sum of £3,120 to be distributed among sixteen institutions.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR TOBERCERRY.

The Local Government Board has assumed what seems to be an unreasonable attitude towards a proposal recently made by the Tobercerry Board of Guardians for the appointment of a superintendent medical officer of health, at a salary of £40 per annum. Tobercerry is a large union with a population of about 20,000, and has suffered severely for years from outbreaks of typhoid fever. There are four dispensary doctors, and each acts as the medical officer of health of his own district, the average salary for such

post being £15 a year. The Local Government Board has written to the guardians pointing out that if the proposed appointment is made three-fourths of the expenses must be borne by the ratepayers, and that the officer appointed must reside within the union. This latter condition cannot be fulfilled, as there is not room for a fifth doctor to make a living, and is all the more absurd because Tobercerry lies midway between the two towns of Sligo and Swinford, both of which are within easy reach by either rail or motor.

India.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

PLAGUE AND TRAVELLING DISPENSARIES IN THE UNITED PROVINCES.

FROM a resolution of Government on the report on plague administration and the working of travelling dispensaries in the United Provinces for the year ending June 30th last, it appears that there was a decrease of 12,648 in the mortality from plague in the year under review, and the number of deaths, 93,160, was the lowest recorded since 1908-9. The most clearly marked changes in the distribution of the disease were to be observed in the Meerut, Allahabad, and Benares divisions, the incidence in the two former being considerably heavier than in the previous year, while the Benares division showed a decrease from 37,014 deaths to 18,786. While the decrease in the province as a whole was satisfactory, the Lieutenant-Governor agreed with the Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals that the unusually heavy mortality in June gave cause for considerable anxiety. The sanction of the Government of India has accordingly been obtained for a considerable strengthening of the staff of travelling dispensaries, and it is hoped that, should a severe outbreak occur, this measure will at least tend to mitigate its severity. In last year's review Sir John Hewett expressed his disappointment at the small number of inoculations performed. In the year under review this rose from 77,318 to 85,137. The increase so far as it goes is satisfactory, but more than half the inoculations were performed in the districts of Gorakhpur, Basti, Ballia, Muzaffarnagar, which all suffered severely from plague both in 1913 and in preceding years. There is still nothing to indicate that inoculation can be pushed with any considerable success except in districts which are and have been for some time suffering from plague in an actively epidemic form. Every effort has been and will be made by the Government to promote inoculation, but as a general measure it can only in the present attitude of the people be regarded as a palliative—useful, indeed, but strictly limited in its operations.

The tendency of the people to resort to evacuation on the appearance of plague has increased, but there is still evidence of a good deal of reluctance on the part of sections of the population to leave their homes. Fear of loss by theft of their property, coupled in some cases with inability to provide themselves with adequate shelters, seem to be the principal causes of this reluctance. Orders have recently been issued to Commissioners authorizing the expenditure of a portion of the plague grants at their disposal on the supply of hutting materials free of cost to really indigent persons willing to evacuate their homes. The question of extended action in this direction, and in the matter of arrangements for the safeguarding of evacuated houses, is under consideration.

The wholesale and indiscriminate destruction of rats has been abandoned for years in these provinces. Experience had clearly established its impracticable character as a general measure for combating outbreaks of plague. Experiments in the destruction of rats by fumigation are, however, being carried out on a limited scale and in selected districts with the object of ascertaining how far it may be possible by this means to check the spread of plague from centres already infected.

The observations on flea infestations in hill stations, referred to in last year's report, were continued up to the end of April, 1913. The conclusion suggested last year—that the danger of a severe epidemic occurring in either Naini Tal or Mussoorie was negligible—was fully borne out