

Ireland.

THE HOUSING OF THE VERY POOR.

THE Earl of Dudley, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, presided last week at a meeting held in the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland to consider the question of the better housing of the very poor. His Excellency stated that 21,000 out of 54,000 families resident in Dublin lived in one-room tenements. He was convinced that it was not the fault of the people themselves that they lived under these conditions. It was due to the fact that in comparison to their weekly wages they could not afford to pay for better accommodation. Great improvement had been effected by the municipal authorities and by the munificent private generosity of Lord Iveagh. But these homes did not meet the wants of the poorest class, but of the artisans who were able to pay 4s. or 5s. a week. They needed accommodation at 2s. or 3s. a week. To secure this a company had been formed with a capital of £20,000 of which £5,000 had been paid up, and the result of the experiment had been fairly satisfactory. The rooms in the converted houses were let at 2s. and 2s. 6d. a week, and it had been made possible for the people who inhabited them to live healthy and decent lives. More than that, the company had been able to pay 3 per cent. But conversion was not satisfactory, and the company had determined to build new houses, beginning with blocks which would house 338 families. But they required £10,000, and the public was asked for its support to that extent. Civilization, education, self-improvement become a farce if people were allowed to exist in squalor, misery, and the degradation which existed in many of these rookeries. He had seen the misery of Irish peasants in the West, but nothing comparable with what existed at their own doors in Dublin. He therefore appealed for help for this company in the efforts which it was making. The Lord Mayor, Sir C. Cameron, the Registrar-General, Sir F. Cruise, M.D., Mr. Justice Barton, Sir J. Nutting, Mr. Lambert Ormsby (President R.C.S.), Mr. C. Eason, Mr. J. Gordon, Q.C., M.P., also spoke. A considerable number of shares were taken up.

SMALL-POX IN DUBLIN.

There have been three more deaths from small-pox in the Dublin Corporation Isolation Hospital, making eight in all. Twenty-three new cases have been reported, 9 of these having been discovered in a house-to-house inspection by the health officials. In one house 3 cases were found. We are glad to see it reported that Sir Charles Cameron advocates a general revaccination. The wonder is that it has not already been enforced. Small-pox cannot be fought without the most energetic action, and although wholesale revaccination costs money, it is cheaper in the long run than a true epidemic. The Lord Mayor has appealed to the public to aid the efforts of the public health department. Some prosecutions for concealment, in which heavy fines have been inflicted, will no doubt bring home to the public in general the need of immediate notification.

IRISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of the Irish Medical Association will take place in Enniskillen on June 17th. Dr. Leonard Kidd, the active local Secretary, has arranged that return railway tickets shall only cost one and a-quarter fares. There will be a special conference of delegates from the Branches, and in the evening there will be a banquet in the Town Hall. An excursion to Bundoran on June 18th has also been arranged.

A meeting to form a North Down Branch of the Irish Medical Association was held in the Medical Institute, Belfast, on April 30th. Dr. MacLaughlin, J.P., presided and Dr. Olpherts acted as Secretary. The following resolutions were unanimously passed:

That the annual holiday leave to infirmary, dispensary, workhouse, prison, and asylum medical officers be one month free of cost to them.

That the salaries paid to medical officers of health are inadequate.

That it be urged on the profession, that no doctor should accept a dispensary appointment under £300 per annum, or workhouse under £120.

That no medical man should interfere with, or take any position rendered vacant by any medical officer, on his resigning office with a view to obtaining a salary approved of the Irish Medical Association.

That no medical man should under any circumstances apply for, or accept any medical appointment when the outgoing medical officer, if entitled to same, has without just cause, been refused superannuation.

That we object to the scale of fees under the Factory Acts, and to the Acts making these compulsory on dispensary doctors.

That a fee should be paid for the examination of harmless pauper lunatics.

That the following should be the minimum fees for temporary duty: Dispensaries, four guineas, and workhouses three or three and a-half guineas per week, or one guinea each per day.

That Sir Wm. Whittie be elected first President of the North Down Branch of the Association, with Dr. Olpherts as Honorary Secretary.

A strong resolution was also passed congratulating Dr. O'Riordan, of Rathcoole, on his recent victory in the courts over both the Celbridge Guardians and the Local Government Board.

POOR LAW CONSUMPTIVE SANATORIUM FOR BELFAST.

The Infirmary Committee of the Belfast Board of Guardians has made a recommendation that a tentative consumptive sanatorium be instituted. The proposal was discussed fully at the meeting of the Board on April 28th, and the principle was on the whole favourably entertained. Some weeks ago the City Council moved in the matter, and it was agreed that, as far as dispensaries were concerned, consumptive patients would be notified to the Corporation; and that an officer would be sent to teach people how to care for the patients; if the home happened to be in an insanitary or dirty state, the public health authorities would cleanse it. The question of a sanatorium for those who could pay something was also entertained. The Board of Guardians is now discussing the question of an institution for its own poor; there are nearly 250 consumptive patients in the union infirmary. At present they are nursed in special wards, and have a special dietary; but it is felt that this is but a poor substitute for a properly-equipped sanatorium in a suitable site. The proposal of twenty beds is, of course, simply experimental. The recommendation was finally referred back to the Infirmary Committee for the purpose of ascertaining what action might be contemplated by the City Corporation, and to make further recommendations.

PUBLIC HEALTH OF BELFAST.

At the meeting of the City Corporation on May 1st the Medical Superintendent Officer of Health reported that 236 cases of zymotic disease had been notified during the last month, including 88 cases of typhoid, 46 of erysipelas, 45 of simple continued fever, 33 of diphtheria, and 16 of scarlet fever. The births numbered 1,106, and the deaths 712; the deaths from phthisis were 131. The annual death-rate from all causes was 20.7. The epidemic of measles is dying out; only 3 deaths are reported from it. The Health Committee recommended the Council to make a by-law constituting it an offence punishable by fine to expectorate in the streets or other public places in the city.

SEASIDE TRIPS FOR PAUPER CHILDREN.

The report of the Special Committee appointed to make arrangements for sending the school children down to the seaside in parties of fifty for a week was also considered. The report recommends that a large empty house be taken, that it be furnished from the Union buildings, and that the children, in parties of fifty, in charge of suitable and competent officers, be sent down during the summer, and that the Local Government Board be asked to support the scheme. The difference between the cost per child in the Union and at the seashore will be paid by voluntary subscriptions from the Board of Guardians and the Trade and Labour Council of Belfast. After some discussion it was agreed to refer the report back to the Committee to make further arrangements as to details.

A WIN FOR GUARDIANS.

The medical officership of the Dispensary of Drumconrath, Ardee Union, became vacant last year by the resignation of Dr. Jones. The salary was £120 with £30 for duties under the Health Act. The Committee declined to adopt the new terms now generally demanded in connexion with these appointments, and as a result, when it came to fill the vacancy in October, there were no candidates. The place remained vacant until Tuesday last, when another attempt was made to fill it. There were three candidates, and 16 members voted for Dr. Crean of Dungarvan Union, and 10 for making no appointment. We are sorry to say that this is a distinct win for the guardians. In a struggle of this kind such incidents are apt to occur, but they will not in any degree shake the general position of the profession in Ireland.

THE St. Petersburg Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis has established a sanatorium for consumptives at Balaklava in the Crimea. It is intended to accommodate 17 patients.