

positions at sea causes them to be incompetent to discharge their duties; and to advise whether any, and if so, what, alterations are desirable in the Board of Trade sight tests at present in force for persons serving or intending to serve in the merchant service or in fishing vessels, or in the way in which those tests are applied. The committee consists of the Right Hon. Arthur H. Dyke Acland (chairman), Lord Rayleigh, O.M., F.R.S., Sir Arthur Rücker, F.R.S., Mr. Raymond Beck, Captain Thomas Golding, Professor Francis Gotch, F.R.S., Mr. Norman Hill, Mr. Edward Nettleship, F.R.C.S., Mr. J. H. Parsons, F.R.C.S., Professor J. H. Poynting, F.R.S., and Professor E. H. Starling, M.D., F.R.S., with Dr. William Watson, F.R.S., and Mr. S. G. Tallents as secretaries.

HUNTERIAN SPECIMENS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.

IN the paragraph on Hunter's free-martin, which appeared in the JOURNAL of May 28th, p. 1315, it was stated that microscopic sections of the testis in one of Hunter's specimens were recently made under the direction of Dr. Arthur Keith, and that, although taken from preparations nearly a century and a half old, these sections, cut in celloidin and stained with logwood and eosin, showed the finest histological details quite clearly. We think it right to add that the first instance in which specimens from Hunter's collection underwent preparation and examination under the microscope according to modern methods will be found recorded in the JOURNAL, vol. ii, 1881, p. 743.¹ Mr. F. S. Eve exhibited some specimens of tumours composed of striped muscle and sarcoma tissue, or striped myosarcoma connected with the kidneys. He detected this condition in a kidney from Hunter's collection, and found that its minute structure was still perfectly distinct. Since the testes of Hunter's free-martin was examined several other Hunterian specimens have been submitted to microscopical research, for the entire pathological series, as well as the Hunterian collection, is undergoing thorough revision as well as rearrangement. The histological elements in sections from many tumours and normal tissues mounted in the eighteenth century come out as clearly as do similar preparations from specimens added to the college museum during the past ten years.

THE ALCOHOL QUESTION IN SWEDEN.

THERE has lately been much discussion in Sweden about the desirability of passing a law forbidding permanently and absolutely the use of all alcoholic drinks in Sweden, but with the reservation that the decision to adopt the law shall rest with each local authority. Enthusiasts for this very radical measure have been going about from house to house collecting signatures, and succeeded in obtaining assenting votes from apparently over 50 per cent. of the population. Few of the remainder seem to have voted either way. Among medical men the preponderance of opinion seemed to favour the view that the time was not yet ripe for such a drastic measure, but 185 were in favour of the passing of such a law. The reason why so drastic a measure is advocated in Sweden at this time is probably to be found in the fact that such a prohibitory law was actually in force in the country during the large strike last summer and autumn without causing much disturbance, and with the result that never has a large strike been carried out in so quiet and orderly a manner. If such an ideal law can ever become possible during this century, Sweden would certainly seem to be the best country for making the experiment.

¹ See also *Trans. Path. Soc.*, vol. xxxiii, 1882, p. 312.

Education has been compulsory since 1686, and its population must be considered to be perhaps the best educated and most law-abiding in the world.

CHAIR OF UROLOGY AT THE LONDON HOSPITAL.

AT the quarterly court of the governors of the London Hospital, held on Wednesday, June 1st, Mr. Hurry Fenwick was elected Professor of Urology on the recommendation of the Medical Council. We also learn that Mr. Hurry Fenwick was unanimously elected President of the ensuing Congress of Urology by the Council of the International Association of Urology at their last meeting in Paris. This International Association, of which Professor Guyon is the President, holds a Congress every third year, its membership is limited, and confined to experts in this particular branch of surgery. They are elected by ballot from among the prominent members of the different urological societies of Europe and America.

Medical Notes in Parliament.

[FROM OUR LOBBY CORRESPONDENT.]

Local Government Board Vote.

Mr. Burns's Salary.

ON June 17th, when the Local Government Board Vote came on, the first point raised by Mr. Walter Long, who opened the debate, was the salary of the President of the Board. He pointed out that the President of the Board of Trade's salary had been raised to £5,000 a year, and urged the abandonment of the self-denying ordinance which was agreed to by the heads of the Board of Trade and Local Government Board in the debates of last year—namely, that the increase from £2,000 to £5,000 per annum should not take place while the then Presidents were in office. Mr. Churchill had passed on to the Home Office, and his successor at the Board of Trade received the higher salary. Mr. Burns had not been moved, and the House had to vote him the increased salary. The Prime Minister followed, and dwelt, as Mr. Long had done, on the enormous increase of work thrown on the Local Government Board in recent years, and the advisability of putting both these great departments on the same footing as the departments presided over by Secretaries of State. He paid a high compliment to Mr. Burns for his devotion to the duties of his office, and urged that he ought to be released from the understanding which under the altered circumstances ought not to be considered binding. Mr. Lees Smith then moved to reduce the salary of the President of the Local Government Board from £5,000 as in the estimate to £2,000 per annum. He did this on purely economical grounds, and not in the least from any want of appreciation of the valuable work of Mr. Burns. Mr. Byles seconded the amendment, and argued that the whole machinery of Government was becoming too costly. It was opposed by Mr. Gibson Bowles and Mr. Nield, and supported by Mr. Lough, Mr. Seddon, and Mr. Jowett, and when the division took place after three hours' debate, the proposal to keep the salary at £2,000 was rejected by 159 to 13.

Vaccination.

Mr. Chaplin then raised the question of the remuneration of vaccination officers, who complained that since the Act of 1907 their work had increased and their fees had diminished. The results of the passing of that Act—whether they were the direct results and whether they were the only results he was not prepared to say—were assuming a very grave aspect. Between the time of the issue of Lord Herschell's report and the passing of that Act the position was that something like one-third of the responsible local authorities in the country had declined to do their duty in carrying out vaccination, and consequently of 900,000 children born in a year at least 300,000 were going unvaccinated. The problem

with which the Local Government Board then had to deal was that of restarting vaccination and bringing the practice into general observance. At that time the number of unvaccinated children was increasing year after year, and if the position had been left as it was vaccination would probably have become a rare occurrence in a few years. Under his auspices a bill was passed in 1898, into which he unwillingly admitted a provision in favour of the conscientious objector, rather than lose the measure altogether. His attempt to preserve the bill was justified by the increase of vaccination which followed its adoption. In one of the East End metropolitan unions the number of vaccinations in the twelve months to September, 1898, performed by public vaccinators, was 336; in the twelve months ending the following September they were 1,130—that is to say, nearly four times as numerous. In three other unions in the metropolis there were 1,181 public vaccinations in the first nine months of 1898, and 2,441 in the first nine months of 1899. Now in unions in Yorkshire the aggregate primary vaccinations done by the public vaccinators in the East Riding for the three months ended September, 1899, was 60 per cent. more than in the like period of 1898. The general results of the Act showed that in 1899 the exemptions were 32,000, and so on we go to 39,000, 41,000, 33,000, 37,000, 39,000, and 43,000, until the present Government came into office, and then they went up to 52,000. What he wanted especially to call the attention of the Committee to was that in 1907 they were 57,000, and that was the year of the passing of the Act by which the statutory declaration was substituted for the necessity of going before the magistrate for the purpose of getting exemptions. What were the exemptions in the following year? They went up from 57,000 to 162,800 in 1908, and to 190,000 in 1909—that was to say, they went up from a percentage of 4.6 in 1905, the last year in which the other party were in power, and they had gone up from 4.6 to 20.8, and that had been done in two years after the passing of the Act. He saw no reason at the present rate of progress why it should not amount to 30,000 or 40,000 in 1910, and if it proceeded to increase with anything like the rapidity that it had done vaccination would be in a dangerous position in this country. Steps ought to be taken to discourage this enormous increase in exemptions which if continued must constitute a great danger.

Mr. Burns said, in reply, that there were 1,420 vaccination officers in England and Wales; they were all paid by fees. Out of the 1,420, 400 gave their whole time to the work; 1,020 out of the 1,420 held other appointments, such as relieving officers or registrars of births, marriages, and deaths, and other appointments. Vaccination officers, speaking generally, did not depend really upon their work as vaccination officers for their living. The guardians who knew them and were their direct employers were most competent to fix their remuneration, except in a few instances, where Poor Law guardians were swayed either by antivaccination ideas or other notions of that kind. The fees were paid and fixed by consent of the Local Government Board. Some people talked about the minimum of 3d. being adhered to, and that 9d. for every successful vaccination alone was paid. In many cases where the population was dense the minimum fees of 3d. and 9d. respectively yielded, so the guardians thought, sufficient remuneration, but where the population was not so dense the 3d. fee became 6d., and in some cases 9d., and the 9d. in successful vaccination became a fee of 1s. 6d., or 2s. 3d., and the average remuneration of these gentlemen for this work was very often from £150 to £200, and in some cases £300. He found that since the Act of 1907 was passed, when he only carried the principle of helping the conscientious objector one stage further, the exemptions had increased from 57,675, or 6.2 per cent., to 190,000, or 20.8 per cent. The exemptions had in some cases caused a diminution of income to some of the officers. He found that out of the 1,420 vaccination officers it was alleged that 487 had sustained a loss;

but out of that number 217, or nearly half, had been paid by their guardians a gratuity to make good the loss, and this had been done with the consent of the Local Government Board. In the remaining cases vaccination officers had not always seen their way to apply for compensation, or else the guardians had declined to pay gratuities. These two classes of cases had to be met, and he was prepared to meet them as fairly as he could. The increase in the number of exemptions had been referred to as a serious danger. He saw from the 1909 report of the Local Government Board that in 1908, a year after the passing of the Act, the exemptions were rapidly increasing, and there was not a single case of small-pox admitted in the small-pox hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board. [Dr. Hillier: A very happy coincidence.] Mr. Burns: And the happy coincidence had continued since 1909. He did not share the alarming fears and suggestions of some people that one of the results of exemption under the Act of 1907 would be a serious increase in small-pox cases, and there was no reason to assume that it would have that effect at all. He thought both the vaccinator and the antivaccinator had not sufficiently given credit to the effect of the education of the individual and of the improvement in domestic and public sanitation.

Boarded-out Children.

Mr. S. H. Butcher brought up the treatment of boarded-out children. Hitherto there had been two systems of boarding out in England and Wales. Of children who were boarded within the union they could get no official information. There were 7,000 of them, and they were under no inspection by the Local Government Board. The only supervision of these children was by the relieving and medical officers. The Poor Law Commissioners said that no effective supervision was found, that the system was not satisfactory, and that this class of children was gradually increasing. The second system was carried out for children who were boarded outside the union in which their parents lived, and two features of the system were—a voluntary unpaid committee, a third of whom must be women, and each member of the committee approved by the Local Government Board; and, secondly, inspection by trained women inspectors. These inspectors travelling over the whole country gave attention to health, food, housing, clothing, and general treatment of the children by a system of inspection only women could conduct. Men had been complete failures for purposes of domestic inspection; only women could discover abuses, and the Poor Law Commission had reported upon this as the ideal system, for girls especially. Last year, when this question was raised, the right hon. gentleman said he would not lose a day in extending the system of inspection to children within the union, but the order which came into force on April 1st, though it was a step towards meeting the points raised and evidence of the right hon. gentleman's sympathetic interest in the treatment of the children, was open to objections. There was no obligation imposed upon guardians to appoint women on the committee; there was the alternative of a committee of guardians, which had broken down. The guardians were allowed to co-opt persons of experience from outside, and this was necessary, for out of 638 boards there were 226 on which there were no women. It ought to be compulsory to put women on these committees.

Another point related to Local Government inspection. There were 7,000 children boarded out within unions and 2,000 outside, and the inspectors for the 2,000 were three qualified women, who found their time fully occupied in inspection over England and Wales. To this number three or possibly four women inspectors were to be added, and these six or seven inspectors were to look after, not only the 2,000 children, but the 7,000 also, and they would have other work of a very laborious kind, inspecting Poor Law schools, industrial homes, infirmaries, and maternity wards—duties that were so heavy as to leave no time for inspection of boarded-out children

within the unions. This additional inspection was quite inadequate; it meant that the 2,000 children would get less care than before, and the 7,000 would not be looked after at all. This was a matter of Poor Law reform that required no legislation.

Mr. Toulmin spoke in support, and urged that children should, so far as possible, be kept outside workhouse after 2 or 3 years of age. There were 70,000 children receiving in-relief at one time, and probably in a year more than double that number. There was, indeed, a slight increase in the number in workhouses at present. He wanted the Local Government Board to discourage more and more the retention of children in workhouses, and he pressed for the appointment of more women inspectors.

Mr. Burns, in replying to the points raised in the debate, said he thought the Committee would agree when they had heard the facts that the Local Government Board had kept the pledge which he made last June in regard to children boarded out within the union. He then promised to give closer attention to this matter, and that there should be no difference, so far as the inspection, control, and supervision of the Local Government Board were concerned, between children boarded out within and children boarded out without the union. That promise had been kept in the Boarding Out Within the Union Order, which was issued in December. In April he appointed three highly skilled and qualified lady inspectors, and he ventured to say the country would welcome these appointments as a substantial contribution to the fulfilment of the promise of June. And at this moment he was engaged in appointing a fourth lady inspector for the west country, including Wales, and in this case he thought they were justified in appointing a Welsh-speaking lady, so that the children in Wales might have the advantage of inspection by one who could talk their own language. These four ladies were the best he could possibly secure for these posts, and they possessed this great advantage—that their previous experience had given them a knowledge of hospital, infirmary, and institutional life that their other inspectors did not enjoy. He was glad to say that they were adapting themselves very rapidly to the inspection of the cottage homes and the boarding out institutions in which Poor Law children were placed, and from all the information he had received they were giving every satisfaction, and were doing their work very well indeed. If he found after a reasonable interval that the work of the visitors was not as well done as it might be, he should ask the House to allow him to issue a revised order based on the experience and circumstances revealed by the new inspectors in the first six or nine months of their work.

The Midwives Bill was withdrawn on Wednesday in the Lords. The bill was waiting for its second reading, and Lord Beauchamp, the new Lord President of the Council, asked leave to withdraw the bill to make certain amendments. He expressed a hope that on its reintroduction the bill would pass both Houses this session.

A Medical Commissioner of Prisons.—Dr. Hillier asked Mr. Churchill last week whether it was intended to appoint as a Prison Commissioner a medical man skilled in mental disease. Mr. Churchill replied that Dr. Donkin, who was for several years one of the Prison Commissioners, on his retirement in February last from the post of Commissioner, was retained in the position of Medical Adviser to the Prison Board, and in that position had a voice at the meetings of the Board, and exercised his medical functions as fully as he did in his former capacity. He was specially skilled in all questions of mental disease, and his expert knowledge had been of great service both to the prison administration and to the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded, of which he was a member. So long as he retained his present post the appointment of a Medical Commissioner was not considered necessary. Dr. Hillier then asked whether the right hon. gentleman was aware that the present Prime Minister, when

this question came on some years ago, very strongly urged the view that there should be a competent qualified medical man placed amongst the Prison Commissioners on the Board, and that the Board should not merely be dependent on outside medical advice. Mr. Churchill answered that this had already formed the subject of a debate in this House, and he could not attempt to reply to the arguments in answer to a question. Dr. Hillier asked whether he was aware that the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department in the course of that debate clearly intimated that it was quite probable that a further appointment would be made to the Board. Mr. Speaker ruled that this did not arise out of the question.

Anthrax.—Mr. Stanier asked how many cases of anthrax there were in the British Isles in horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs respectively in the years 1908 and 1909; and also the same figures during the first five months of this year. Sir E. Strachey replied that the subjoined table gave the information:

Year.	Cattle.	Sheep.	Swine.	Horses.	Total.
1908	1,107	34	220	58	1,419
1909	1,244	70	310	74	1,698
1910 (first five months)	685	15	119	38	857

In answer to a further question, Sir Edward Strachey said that the Board had reason to believe that a considerable proportion of the cases now returned as anthrax were not so in fact; but as in all cases where the cause of death was diagnosed as anthrax the animal's carcass was immediately destroyed, it was seldom possible to inquire fully into the cause of death. The bacillus of anthrax was easy to identify when present in fresh blood, but it was extremely difficult to exclude its presence when the animal had been dead for several hours. The Board had never expressed the opinion that anthrax could be stamped out; it could only be controlled. In reply to Mr. Charles Bathurst, Sir E. Strachey said that the Board had some doubt as to the accuracy of the diagnosis in some of the cases of disease returned as anthrax, and they were considering the issue of a revised Anthrax Order at an early date, designed to secure a more uniform and efficient method of diagnosis. The Board's veterinary advisers had little hope that anthrax could be stamped out, but every effort would be made to prevent the spread of infection. Asked further whether the increase of over 12 per cent. in the cases during the latter half of last year, and that three persons had recently died from the malady, did not demand stringent action, Sir E. Strachey said that he was aware of the serious increase, and that was the reason the Board were contemplating further action. In the course of the debate on the vote for the Board of Agriculture, Mr. Bathurst called attention to the subject, and said that the disease was found in fifteen to eighteen counties, and cases were forthcoming to show that persons attending cattle or engaged in slaughter-houses were frequently infected. In Wiltshire the disease was traceable to imported feeding stuffs. He urged the need for more stringent measures to stamp out the disease. Other speakers referred to this subject in the course of the debate, and Sir Edward Strachey, in his reply, said that he was alive to the serious nature of an outbreak of anthrax, and the Board would do all they could to prosecute investigations concerning this terrible scourge.

Tuberculosis and the Milk Bill.—Mr. Bathurst raised the question of tuberculosis and milk in the debate, and said he was glad that the Government Milk Bill did not become law, because it was founded on the third interim report of the Commission, which was not based on the experiments conducted or the evidence submitted. If on the

strength of that report they were going to have a Milk Bill putting most harassing restrictions on the dairy industry, it would be a great injustice to the agricultural community, and the advance in the price of milk would be a very serious matter to the poor. He was convinced that the danger arising from even tuberculous cattle had a very small effect in bringing about the disease in the large urban centres, and that a much more serious matter was the increasing scarcity of good milk to be obtained at a reasonable price. It was perfectly well known that tuberculosis was not hereditary either among human beings or cattle, and milk was safe unless the animal was suffering from a diseased udder or was physically emaciated by the disease. He viewed with alarm the time when officious and uninstructed officials of the urban authorities would go into healthy districts and condemn right and left, not only the cattle sheds and byres but also the cattle, because they considered them a danger to public health. Sir William Collins said that in dealing with diseases it was necessary to base administrative procedure on the latest scientific opinion. Unfortunately there were cases—tuberculosis for instance—in which opinion had been known to vary within wide limits. In regard to swine fever, foot-and-mouth disease, and pleuropneumonia, bacteriology had gone back as to the organism which could be assigned as the cause of the disease. He had hoped that those diseases would be made the subject of more elaborate scientific investigation. He hoped they might be told that it was intended to institute more exhaustive and thorough inquiry into the diseases of animals so that by arriving at a more definite opinion of their causes, administrative measures could be made more effective. The rest of the debate shifted off to the importation of foreign cattle and the prevalence of foot and mouth disease.

Official Certifying Surgeons.—Mr. Wedgwood asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he contemplated taking any steps to prevent the official certifying surgeons acting privately for trade unions or insurance companies in any capacity wherein fees were paid for medical decisions or reports. Mr. Churchill said that it would not be possible to lay down any general rule on the subject, because in industrial districts it was often difficult to find a well-qualified medical man who did not hold some appointment in connexion with employers or associations of workpeople. The consideration, however, was borne in mind in making appointments, and the Department was always prepared to inquire into any case of grievance that might be brought to its notice. He might add that an appeal lay from decisions of a certifying surgeon under the Workmen's Compensation Act to the medical referee appointed under that Act. Asked if he could not arrange that where there were several certifying surgeons some should be whole-time officials, Mr. Churchill said he would give his best attention to any local case.

Infectious Diseases Hospitals.—Major Adam asked the President of the Local Government Board if he would state the number of infectious hospitals provided by the various local sanitary authorities in England and Wales, their cost for erection and maintenance, and the number of patients admitted over a convenient period of years; and whether, in view of the diversity of the skilled and medical experience which existed on the subject and the cost to the ratepayers which was involved, he would cause an inquiry to be made into the whole question of the usefulness of infectious hospitals, other than small-pox hospitals, as a means of preventing the spread of disease, and generally, in view of the extended experience which now exists on the subject, into the advantages or disadvantages which may be found to attend their use. Mr. Burns replied that he was not at present in possession of complete information on the points mentioned in the first part of the question. He might say, however, that by the General Order which

would very shortly be issued in pursuance of Sub-section 2 of Section 68 of the Housing and Town Planning, etc., Act of last session, the County Medical Officer of Health would be required to inquire into and report upon the hospital accommodation in each county and upon any need for the provision of further accommodation. As regards the second part of the question, he was advised that there could be no doubt as to the utility of isolation hospitals in the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases, when conjoined with good administration in regard to the other means necessary to prevent the spread of infection, among which the careful search for overlooked or non-certified cases of the same disease bore an important part.

Poor Law Children.—In answer to a series of questions, Mr. Burns gave the following information:—(1) Children in Workhouses and Infirmaries: The latest returns—namely, those for January 1st, 1910—showed that the number of children in separate Poor Law infirmaries in England and Wales was 7,128, whilst the number in workhouse wards (including infirm wards) was 17,047. The returns did not show how many of these children were over 3 years of age and how many were under that age, but they showed that of the total number of children in all Poor Law establishments, 8,914 were under the age of 3. The majority of these would necessarily be in workhouses and workhouse infirmaries, and could not well be separated from their mothers. (2) Children in Schools and Homes: The number of children maintained outside the workhouse on January 1st, 1910 (the date of the last returns), in the undermentioned classes of Poor Law schools and homes was as follows:

In district schools	...	...	3,883
In separate schools	...	...	7,604
In grouped cottage homes	...	...	11,640
In scattered homes	...	...	7,366
And in other homes	...	...	2,099

(3) Children Boarded Out: The number of Poor Law children who were at the date of last return (that is, January 1st, 1910) boarded out beyond the union was 1,923; the number boarded out within the union was 6,890.

Tuberculosis in Ireland.—Last week Mr. Stephen Gwynn asked for information as to the change in the proportion of deaths in Ireland from tuberculosis, and Mr. Birrell replied that the Registrar-General's returns showed that the total number of deaths from all forms of tuberculosis in Ireland had decreased from 11,679 in 1907 to 11,293 in 1908, and 10,594 in 1909. The marked decrease in the number of deaths from tuberculosis was very gratifying, and must prove a great encouragement to those who for some years past had been engaged in a strenuous effort to check and extirpate the disease. In answer to further questions, Mr. Birrell admitted that there had been some change made by the Registrar-General in the classification in the mortality returns, but he was not in a position to say what effect it would have on the figures.

Public Health Prosecution (Dublin).—In answer to Captain Cooper, Mr. Birrell stated last week that a summons was issued on behalf of the North Dublin Rural District Council against the Agricultural College at Glasnevin for keeping manure in the manure pit attached to the farmyard, on the ground of its proximity to the farm dairy. The Department pleaded that the manure pit, which had occupied its present position since the institution was built, was neither a nuisance nor a danger to public health, and this view was supported by certificates from high public health and veterinary authorities. The result of the proceedings was that the magistrates suggested a conference between the officers of the Department and of the district council, and adjourned the case for two months. No such ridiculous plea as suggested, namely, that the Agricultural Department was above the law, was employed on the occasion referred to.