

REPORT OF A SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE VACCINATION BILL.

YOUR Committee, after much discussion, and after hearing a considerable amount of evidence, have come to the following Resolutions:—

That it will be impracticable at present to establish a general system of compulsory vaccination; but, with a view to encourage vaccination as much as possible among the people, that it is expedient that the Government should obtain a constant supply of pure lymph, guaranteed by one of the English vaccine establishments or otherwise.

That Public Vaccinators should be appointed in all centres of population, to whom all persons who require gratuitous vaccination for their children may apply.

That Public Vaccinators (who may be non-medical persons, whose competency should be certified by some professional authority, and who should use only lymph supplied by the Government,) should be employed to vaccinate and make periodical circuits in rural districts for the purpose.

That, in order to provide gratuitous vaccination to those who may require it, the payment of Public Vaccinators should be by salary or fees paid by the Government.

That the Government should cause a circular to be drawn up and distributed throughout the country, conveying, in popular language, the latest scientific opinions as to the advantages of vaccination.

That a sum should be placed on the Estimates to meet the necessary expenses.

Having arrived at these conclusions, your Committee cannot recommend that the present Bill should be proceeded with. They would propose that a new Bill should be introduced next Session, repealing the existing Act of 1863, imposing a penalty on inoculation, enjoining the Government to make provisions in conformity with the above Resolutions for encouraging voluntary vaccination, and providing for registration, and for the issue by the Registrars of Births of notices recommending vaccination, and informing the Public Vaccinators of all cases of neglect within their districts.

Your Committee would also suggest that proof of vaccination might be required, as in the United States of America, before admission of children to public schools, and of clerks and others to public employment. By these means considerable indirect compulsion would be effected.

EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

MONDAY, 11TH JULY, 1870.

Dr. Hector in attendance, and examined.

1. *Sir D. Monro.*] I believe that you have had your attention drawn to the subject of vaccination for some time past?—Yes. It was referred to me by the Government about three years ago.

*Dr. Hector,
F.R.S.*

11th July, 1870.

2. What is your opinion of the proposed Vaccination Act?—I think that it is unnecessarily complicated, and that it fails distinctly to meet the chief defect of the present Act, which is, that on the medical officer is imposed the duty of prosecuting persons who have not had their children vaccinated. I was in favour of the Act in the form in which it was brought in last Session, and which was thrown out by the Lower House. I think, and it is the opinion of several other medical men, that if the duty of having the child vaccinated, and of making a return to the Registrar, were left to the parents, and that if the proper penalties for neglect of vaccination were enforced, the parents would generally find means of having their children vaccinated.

3. Do you think that the machinery proposed by the Act would be sufficient for the accomplishment of the first step towards the object in view?—I am of opinion that the introduction of districts into the Act complicates it unnecessarily. Public Vaccinators should be appointed to attend at country places, whose duty it would be to keep on hand a supply of vaccine matter for distribution, and to perform the operation gratuitously in pauper cases. But the claim on their services should not be defined by the applicant being a resident in a certain district.

4. What should you consider as conclusive evidence that the operation had been properly performed?—The existence of the characteristic mark of successful vaccination on the arm of the child.

4. Do you think that clause 10 of the proposed Act would work?—It would not work well in country districts. Children in out of the way districts would have to be brought to town and kept there for a week exposed to the danger of contracting diseases unknown in the country, or else the medical officer would require to make two journeys into the country.