

Mr. HORRELL (North Canterbury) heartily approved of the motion. The scheme, as he understood it, put in a nutshell, amounted to this: that the Education Department undertook the training of the teachers and the examination of the pupils, and the Hospitals Department undertook the treatment. The Health Department were to do the administration work, with the assistance of the Hospital Boards.

Mr. SHRIMPTON (Hawke's Bay) would like to give an instance to show the value of the medical inspection of school-children. Only the other day, on the reassembling of a school in his district, at which there were about two hundred children, the doctor of the hospital was requested to examine the children. There had previously been an outbreak of scarlatina in the district, but it was supposed to have sufficiently subsided to enable the children to attend school. The examination of those children showed that there were no less than nine children with infection, which would have spread the disease again.

Mr. MACKAY (Auckland) would give this motion his most hearty support. He had been intimately connected with education in Auckland for a number of years, and he had been forced to the conclusion that something was absolutely necessary with regard to the medical inspection of school-children, and also, as a natural corollary, with regard to the examination of the teeth. Some time ago in Auckland Dr. M. Herz, a well-known bloodless surgeon, offered to examine the children of the State schools, and he (Mr. Mackay) entered heartily into the idea. Unfortunately, however, one or two of the headmasters objected so strongly and raised so much opposition amongst the parents that he had to desist. However, they had a report from Dr. Herz, who examined for curvature, and it was surprising to find there was such a great tendency to curvature—lateral curvature especially. The question then arose as to whether the furniture in the schools was the best that could be procured in the interests of the health of the pupils. Then, with regard to the examination of the teeth of the children, no scheme would be complete without that.

The INSPECTOR-GENERAL said that would come subsequently. He agreed that the scheme would not be complete without dental examination.

Mr. MACKAY said in Auckland they were already doing splendid work in connection with the children's teeth. There had been 2,573 sets of teeth examined, and there were many cases treated in the Auckland Dental Hospital. He suggested that Dr. Valentine's scheme be printed and circulated as soon as possible amongst the Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards, the Education Boards, and the School Committees as well, because it was the Committees that came most in touch with the parents.

Dr. FINCH (District Health Officer, Canterbury) said he could throw very little fresh light on this subject. He agreed with Mr. Hogben that in New Zealand they should be able to treat the child, whereas in other countries, at the start, at all events, they only inspected the children. Ten years ago, when inspection was started in England, they flooded the voluntary hospitals with school-children, who wanted their eyes, and so on, seen to, and the hospitals strongly objected. Of course, in this country the system was totally different. We were going in for medical inspection of school-children, and were paying more attention to their treatment. In England, of course, they had serious difficulties to face, but he thought they were paying far too much attention to inspection and not enough to treatment. Mr. Horrell was correct in stating that the Education Boards would provide the machinery for inspecting the children, while the Hospital Boards were responsible for treating those who were indigent, or those going to hospitals who were able to pay the fees.

Mr. WALKER (Otago) did not altogether agree with his colleague, Mr. Ewing, on this question. Although it would be realized that the carrying-out of this scheme of inspection would throw a certain amount of expense on the Hospital Boards, he thought it would be admitted it would save a large amount of trouble in the future. As in consumption they were anxious to get at the incipient cases, so in the diseases of children they set at them early and endeavoured to arrest them in the early stages. He did not at all agree with Mr. Ewing that this was a question to be looked at entirely from the "money" point of view, because he recognized there was a higher thing than money. They had to regard these children as their special property, and if the troubles of these children could be arrested in the early stages, they would be doing really good work for the State. Dr. Valentine had stated that the cost would be about £7,500, distributed over the whole of the Hospital Boards of the Dominion. Well, that was not a very serious matter. And he presumed as time went on the cost would be lessened.

The INSPECTOR-GENERAL.—That is so.

Mr. WALKER did not think any Board would grudge the expenditure. As for the details, they would be in able hands.

Dr. HARDWICK SMITH (Medical Superintendent, Wellington Hospital) did not think much could be added to what had already been said on this subject. The scheme had been placed before the Conference most lucidly, and it was not the details so much that the Inspector-General wanted them to discuss as the principle. The Conference was asked to affirm the principle, and he believed the principle would be unanimously affirmed by the delegates present. This was a scheme of paramount importance, because, to his mind, the fostering of public health in the young was of more importance than the stamping-out of disease that already existed. They wanted to take the boys and girls of to-day and mould them, and build them up to become the strong men and women of to-morrow. The Defence Department took the boy at puberty, but educational and public health institutions wanted to take him in infancy, so that at puberty he could be taken over by the State, and could go and fulfil his destiny in the country. They wanted also to get the girl, and mould her character, build her up, and make a healthy woman and a healthy mother of her; because if our mothers were not healthy and sound, the race was going to degenerate; and we should not