

places, such as in railway trains, trams, shops, &c." He does not advocate their universal use. He concludes,—

"I think I can say that the profession is quite confident that the infection is only transmitted by contact, and I do not consider it necessary for people to wear masks out-of-doors unless they happen to be in crowded streets or where there are large numbers of people assembled."

Dr. Bowie says,—

"A mask is an exceedingly good thing if used intelligently, and dangerous if used without intelligence. If you are in the open air I do not see why you should wear a mask if you are not coming into close contact with crowds of people. But V.A.D.s and doctors who are in close contact with disease and have to move amongst the patients might use them."

ALCOHOL.

The question of the value of alcohol in combating the epidemic was not dealt with by many witnesses. In an interesting and valuable report by four professors, lecturers, and tutors in the Medical School, Otago University, it is stated,—

"*To support the Circulation.*—Alcohol was used as a stimulant, chiefly in the form of brandy, in doses 6-8 oz. in the twenty-four hours. Transient improvement often followed, but there was no enduring effect. It served best as an explosive stimulant. It was also used for its narcotic action and food value in delirious and convalescent cases. The delirium was so violent that the mild narcotic effect of alcohol was of little avail; but in convalescent cases a beneficial action was evident. The patients experienced a feeling of well-being, ate more heartily, slept more soundly, and progressed more rapidly towards recovery under its influence. Alcohol had no apparent effect in combating the toxæmia of the disease."

Dr. Fyffe (president of the Wellington Branch of the Royal British Medical Association) claimed alcohol "as the most invaluable drug we had in the epidemic not only to reduce temperature, but to keep the patients' strength up." "It did not," he adds, "make them sick like ammonia, which upsets the digestion considerably." In reply to a question, "Do you consider it useful as a prophylactic?" he says, "It is my experience that men who take a reasonable amount of alcohol—two or three whiskies and soda a day—did not get the disease in the way that other people got it. I could never have got through the epidemic without it." (The witness had himself, like very many other medical men, survived an attack.) On the other hand, Dr. Elizabeth Platts-Mills, describing and commending the treatment in the emergency hospital, Karori, from which alcohol was practically excluded, condemns in the strongest manner what she considers the lavish use of alcohol as a medicine, adding her belief that many lived not because but in spite of the alcohol given to them.

The weight of medical evidence was undoubtedly in favour of alcohol judiciously administered as a stimulant during an attack and in convalescence.

VENTILATION.

The medical men whose opinions we have received are unanimous as to the paramount importance of fresh air in combating the epidemic. Excellent results have been obtained from almost a practically absolute fresh-air treatment. We have an interesting account from a Mr. Carmine, who, although not a professional man, appears to have secured very good results in the treatment, practically in the open air, of 150 patients; these being a camp of railway workers in a district north of Auckland, where no doctor or nurse was available. An instance was cited by one medical witness in the case of the Matron of St. Helens Hospital, who was nursing at Hawera during the epidemic, when owing to the overcrowding of wards many of the patients, some of them being the severest cases, were treated in outside shelters. They took children out on balconies, and put others into tents with open flies, putting wooden floors in the tents. It was stated that the results were so satisfactory that the Hospital Board were determined, in the event of another epidemic, to treat all their patients by fresh-air methods. The same witness gave us the experience reported to him by Dr. Wishart, a house surgeon of the Dunedin