

doubt that considerable progress has been made in the direction of focussing public attention upon the fundamentals of healthy living. Much more, however, remains to be done.

In the development of the propaganda of the division there has for some time been an increasing need for a definition of policy in order that the recommendations made to the public may as far as possible be uniform and consistent. With this object in view a conference was held during the year, as a result of which a sub-committee was appointed to draw up a statement of fundamental principles connected with the subject of diet and the prevention of dental disease. It is now recognized that the health of the community is essentially dependent upon the health of the individual, and the personal habits of the individual are therefore coming to be regarded more and more as the concern of the State. This direction of attention, not to the community only, but to the individual who composes it, marks the beginning of a new era in preventive medicine. Consequently I regard the Department's pronouncement, which will be published shortly, stating general guiding principles in regard to food and nutrition and the prevention of dental disease, as a forward step of the very greatest moment, not in relation to school medical work only, but as having an important general bearing upon the health of the whole community.

SECTION 4.—HEALTH TEACHING IN SCHOOLS.

One of the most important channels of educative reform is unquestionably the teaching given to the children in schools. Talks on health are given to the children by school medical officers, but without the wholehearted co-operation of the teachers little permanent good can be effected. It is upon the more continuous influence and personal example of the school-teacher that we must mainly rely to bring about real and lasting improvement in habit and outlook in regard to matters of healthy living. One school medical officer writes as follows: "I believe that a certain austerity should be taught as an ideal. This is necessary to counteract the tendencies of to-day, many of which are in the direction of selfishness of habit and conduct with especial regard to the personal indulgences of sweets and confectionery, frequent meals, picture-shows, and a demand for ever-increasing bodily comfort. This craving for new sensations, either of the palate or of the other senses, should be the warning signal that all is not well. There is no doubt that it leads to the path of national degeneracy and physical unfitness."

The leading of the healthy life, whether viewed as a civic duty or as a matter of self-interest, is indeed a moral matter, and exercises the powers of discrimination, self-control, and obedience to law. As an ideal to be aspired to, as a possession to be won and retained, health and the habits which promote it can, I believe, be presented to the child's mind in ways which readily stimulate interest and enthusiasm. Modern educational methods and the spirit of team work and wholesome competition can undoubtedly effect an enormous amount in this direction. Instead of being an isolated subject, the teaching of health should be interwoven with the whole education of the child. Its practical bearing can be brought out in the schoolroom, the playground, and athletic field, and the results of its maintenance or loss can be illustrated from history. In fact, the cultivation of health can be made a valuable means as well as an end in itself in education. A revision, however, of the present education syllabus relating to hygiene is urgently needed as being the basis of the subject as far as the schools are concerned.

SECTION 5.—PHYSICAL TRAINING, ETC.

The system of physical training as set out in the syllabus issued by the Education Department is of the very greatest value in connection with the school medical officer's work, and as a remedial as well as a preventive measure it has an influence upon the health of the school-children the importance of which would be difficult to overestimate. It is very much to be regretted that it was found necessary to reduce the staff of physical instructors, the present number being too few to deal adequately with the work which is so much needed of them. While it is the school-teachers who actually conduct the physical-training classes in the schools, yet it is upon the periodic visits of the trained instructors that the teachers' interest and efficiency in the work so intimately depend. The school medical staff find a large amount of defect in school-children which is readily remediable by physical exercises, and for which the school system of physical training provides the only generally available means of treatment. Apart from the value of physical training as a factor in the general education of the child, it is important to recognize that a system of school medical inspection not supplemented by a scheme of efficient physical training is seriously handicapped in its power to remedy an important class of common defects.

TOOTH-BRUSH DRILL.

Tooth-brush drill has in some districts been further developed during the year, and it is noteworthy that one branch of the Educational Institute has reported strongly in favour of its general adoption. This may be taken as an important testimony not only to the value of cleanliness of the mouth from the health point of view, but also, I think, that there is personal advantage to the school-teacher working with a class of children whose mouths are clean. This attitude to tooth-brush drill, however, is far from universal amongst the teachers, as in some large districts this drill is practically non-existent. I believe that this is largely, if not altogether, because in these districts tooth-brush drill has not been given a trial. Some teachers, however, are obtaining excellent results by frequent inspections of the children's teeth and by urging them to use the tooth-brush regularly at home. Whatever method may be adopted it is of the utmost importance that school-teachers should recognize that the hygiene of the mouth—the inculcation of a "clean-mouth conscience"—is one of the primary essentials in the education of children.