

be wiser to leave certain public-health matters in the hands of the larger municipalities, the smaller local authorities might with advantage waive all their responsibilities under the Public Health Act to the Boards of their respective districts.

Without statutory powers, a Hospital Board, comprised as it is of representatives of all the local authorities of its district, can do more towards influencing public opinion in the right direction as regards public health than a small local authority armed with all the powers of the Public Health Act. There is much work for the Boards in the fields of prevention, and their efforts, if rightly directed, should lessen the demands on their hospital beds, which are now largely occupied by patients with ailments or diseases which may rightly be regarded as preventible.

Take, for example, tubercular diseases: The most important resolutions carried at the Conference were those relating to the measures that should be taken to prevent the spread of tubercular diseases in the Dominion. Dr. Blackmore's excellent address on the subject, subsequent to some introductory remarks by Mr. Horrell, Chairman of the North Canterbury Board, stimulated the delegates to a sense of their responsibilities with regard to this scourge of mankind, and impressed them with the need for immediate and concerted action. The campaign, therefore, will be conducted on the lines suggested in the Public Health Report of last year, which were unanimously adopted by the Conference.

The medical inspection of school-children: Here, again, the Conference was in the field of preventive medicine. It is a matter for regret that the discussion of a subject of such importance to the Dominion was postponed to the latter hours of the meeting. Delegates had forgotten some of the details outlined in the paper on the subject, read two days before the discussion took place. Nevertheless, it was discussed sufficiently to show that the meeting was unanimously of opinion that the medical inspection of school-children was necessary, and that a scheme such as outlined should be put into operation.

The health of the Native race was introduced by Mr. Powell, of the Waiapu Hospital Board, who advocated the employment of nurses for work among the Maoris, based on his actual experiences of the work of such nurses during an outbreak of typhoid fever in his district. The meeting unanimously approved the proposals of the Department with regard to special nurses for work among the Maoris.

Finally, as regards the public-health section of the Conference, it is to be hoped that during the ensuing year the Christchurch, Auckland, and Wellington Boards will appoint Bacteriologists to their respective hospitals, such officers to be whole-time officers of the Board.

In considering the resolutions of the Conference with regard to the administration of hospitals, it will be noted that uniformity was the dominant note of the discussions that followed the addresses. I would particularly direct attention to the papers read by Mr. Shrimpton, Chairman of the Napier Board, and Mr. Nolan, Chairman of the Hawera Board, on nursing questions. The returns of the Hospital Boards who are to be circularized with regard to the efficiency of the eight-hours system for nurses will be awaited with interest.

Two excellent papers on hospital economics and finance were read respectively by Mr. Kirk, Chairman of the Wellington Hospital Committee, and Mr. Mackay, Chairman of the Auckland Board. As an outcome of the latter paper, the Conference decided to adopt regulations with regard to the keeping of accounts and statistics recommended by the Department. This system was devised by Mr. Killick, Chief Clerk of the Department, after consulting the Secretaries of our leading hospitals, and with some modifications was finally adopted by the Conference on the recommendation of the special committee set up to report thereon. The adoption by the Conference of these regulations was a great step in the direction of uniformity.

Interesting discussions followed the addresses of Mr. Bellringer, Chairman of the Taranaki Board, on the district nursing scheme, and Mr. Stewart, Chairman of the Bay of Islands Board, on the need for maternity wards in our country hospitals. The success of the district nurse in this country is assured—especially where the medical men of the district are in sympathy with the movement, which is sure to be the case, provided the district nurse adheres to the rules laid down, and does not attempt to usurp the functions of the medical practitioner. That several country hospitals will erect small maternity wards during the next few years is practically certain. These will not only be for the benefit of the patients, but will also facilitate the training of midwives.

The paper read by the Chairman of the Conference, Mr. J. G. Wilson, who is also Chairman of the Palmerston Hospital Board—which resulted in the Conference passing a resolution to the effect that only one radium institute is necessary for the purposes of the Dominion—was an important one. It is of little use providing each hospital with radium unless there is a skilled radiologist available for its use—in fact, in the hands of an inexperienced practitioner this treatment may be of great danger to the patient. Moreover, no one Hospital Board could well afford the expense of purchasing sufficient radium for any practical use.

On social questions I would refer to the interesting discussions following the addresses of Mrs. Fell, a member of the Nelson Board, and Mrs. Wilson, a member of the North Canterbury Board. Though there were many present who had expressed themselves against women having seats on our Boards, I cannot but think they must have modified their views after hearing the remarks of those ladies. We want more such members as Mrs. Fell and Mrs. Wilson on our Boards.

It was satisfactory to note from the discussions that so far the Act of 1909 was regarded by delegates as working well, and in the interests of the Dominion. Very few amendments of a serious nature were mooted. The resolutions in the direction of uniformity and economy will, no doubt, be carefully considered when the next Hospitals Amendment Bill is brought down, and also those resolutions of a social nature.

It is a pity that the final stages of this Conference were somewhat rushed. Nevertheless, many of the delegates returned to their homes impressed with the magnitude of their responsibilities, and zealous to get the many resolutions carried put into operation by their Boards. Time