

fected by it, and sufferers from it are most anxious to conceal the fact that they are so affected.

Keeping these points in view, and supposing such a law being enforced, you can easily understand that infected persons will not seek medical aid, knowing that by so doing they subject themselves to compulsory notification and compulsory detention for an indefinite period. It is most important that medical treatment should be given in the earliest, which are also the most infectious, stages of the disease, but these compulsory measures would have the effect of preventing affected persons from seeking medical aid as long as possible.

Compulsory notification cannot be enforced, for the existence of the disease is known only to the doctor and the patient. How can any pressure be brought to induce the doctor to notify? If he fails to do so, how is the evidence to be obtained that will convict him? The patient is not likely to give it, and save him and the doctor you have no one else to look to for information or evidence. Can you imagine the law being put in force against rich and influential men, or men in a public position, and if not in their case, why in any other? It is quite evident compulsory notification would not be universally and impartially applied, and there is no means to insure its being done; and laws which cannot and will not be enforced impartially against all sections of the community should not be placed on the Statute Book, otherwise justice and liberty will be lost to us as a nation. Any one giving the clause a few moments careful and thoughtful consideration, and knowing anything of the nature of the disease, can see that its inclusion is merely to serve as a blind to the real intention of the proposal, which is contained in the next provision of compulsory examination on suspicion. Now, who are the persons who would or could be suspected of being affected with venereal disease? Can you imagine any man being compelled to submit to compulsory examination on suspicion? Can you think of a married woman being subject to such a provision? Compulsion implies police enforcement, and you know no Government would dare to put such a provision into force against any man in any class of society, or against any class of women, save one. And it is

against that class, and that class alone, that these proposals are directed, and the moment compulsory examination of prostitutes becomes legal, you have the C.D. Acts in operation, and the recognition and regulation of vice by the State. In this connection let us remember the words of that famous Protest of Women, "That State control of vice means the removal of a moral restraint," and all the experience of past ages, of every country where regulation has existed, testifies to their truth.

In the fight against the C.D. Acts in England, a petition in their favour was secured from prostitutes, but with that exception I know of no instance where a woman's voice was lifted in their behalf, and it is most amazing that in this country women can be found who approve of a proposal leading directly to State regulation of vice.

But can we do nothing? Are we to sit with folded hands while these diseases work physical degeneration among us? By no means. When reliance on a false system is destroyed, the way is cleared for true reforms. These diseases will be most effectually dealt with by inducing all sufferers, guilty or innocent, to present themselves for treatment, rather than by compulsory measures, which can reach only a section of those infected, and that section not the one that spreads disease among wives and children.

A most important point strongly emphasised by experts is the education of the public, and young people especially, in sex hygiene by means of lectures, literature, and private talks. It was insisted upon again and again by the men who gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease, which sat last year in England, that young men should be informed in time of the nature of these diseases and their results. The instruction of children in sex hygiene by special teachers, carefully selected and trained, was advocated. Another point stressed was the better education of the medical student on these matters, and when that is an accomplished fact advocacy of compulsory measures by the medical profession will be a thing of the past. The need for timely warning to young men was mentioned in the Report on Venereal Disease presented to the Medical Congress held in Auckland last year.

It stated that it was the common experience of medical practitioners to find that the newly infected have been greatly ignorant of syphilis and its prevalence.

In that same Report reference was made to the fact that children born of women affected by syphilis are ill-nourished, immature, weakly, show signs of inherited disease, and they frequently die within the year of birth. Reference was also made to the tendency of women so affected to have untimely births, and one particular case was quoted, from many, from Dr. F. W. Mott. The mother married at 20, the father being 22. There were 12 children—the first, premature at 5 months; 2nd, the same; the 3rd at 6 months; the 4th, at 7 months, lived 8 hours; 5th, born alive, very frail, ulcers on legs, eyes affected; 6th, a girl, at the age of 14 suffering from juvenile general paralysis, with well marked signs of congenital syphilis; 7th, a girl, living, well; 8th, a boy, living, well; 9th, a boy, living, well; 10th, a boy, died at 11 months of convulsions; 11th, a girl, died at 8 months, brain disease and club foot; 12th, a boy, living, well.

Now, in view of such facts as these, can it be right for medical practitioners never to tell a married woman when she is suffering from venereal disease, the reason being the danger of disturbing domestic harmony; but is it not a dreadful thing, a great wrong, to let a woman go on ignorantly bearing children to a diseased man? Has she not a right to a voice in the matter, and should not a woman be protected by law if, under such circumstances, she absolutely refuses motherhood, by making venereal disease a cause for legal separation? And should not doctors be legally bound to inform married women of the nature of their complaint when they are affected by venereal disease?

In the discussion which followed the Report just referred to, it was mentioned by Dr. Harvey Sutton, from Melbourne, that he had given definite information in sex hygiene and on venereal disease to the students at a training college, their ages ranging from 16 to 19. The women teachers under the Education Department of Victoria also requested the Department to arrange for them such a course of instruction, and it would include the junior teachers of 16 and