

VENEREAL DISEASE.

UNIVERSITY'S CO-OPERATION.

(From "Sydney Daily Telegraph").

Sydney University has taken up the venereal disease problem, and a society has been formed to go fully into the question.

At a big meeting in the Union Hall recently, with the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine (Sir Thomas Anderson-Stuart) as president, the Society for Combating Venereal Diseases was constituted.

Sir Thomas Anderson-Stuart said that he had come closely in touch with the venereal diseases question in his position as chairman of the Royal Prince Albert Hospital. The establishment of night clinics there had done a lot of good. They had been overwhelmed with patients, and that showed that there was an urgent necessity for something to be done to alleviate the evil. The proposed association could help a good deal. It was largely due to the University's representation that the Defence Department had established prevention tents in most of the camps. (Applause).

In his introductory address Professor Wilson, chairman of the Professorial Board, said the war had brought many realities home to us, and had cleared our visions of a considerable amount of sentiment and artificiality. The problem of venereal disease involved a great many complex issues, deeply rooted in the human nature, in the social organisation, in the family, and in the State. By itself the problem might be regarded as simple. But its association with moral delinquency complicated the matter. The difficulty lay in the moral stigma. It could not be denied that generally, contagion was the result of moral delinquency. On the other hand, it was a grave error to look upon the frequent pathological results as an ethical punishment. (Applause). The physical and pathological consequences could be avoided, and that placed the question outside the domain of ethical consideration. Society should aim at nothing less than physical immunity—the moral consequences could not be avoided. Venereal diseases should be treated under the same rules as other contagious diseases. An outstanding public question was bound up in it, namely, the State reputation for vice. It had been urged that sexual impulse was impervious, and of a fixed inten-

sity, but no evolutionist could admit that public and private morality was unprogressive. We have already advanced from promiscuity to polygamy, and then to monogamy. He refused to sanction, in his own mind, the permanent maintenance of outcast women. (Applause).

Professor D. A. Welsh moved that the society be formed. He thought the world had come to a wider and saner outlook on sexual questions than had prevailed in the past. The war had brought us to a greater reality of the importance of dealing with venereal diseases, and the question came second only to the great struggle. The case bore two aspects—immorality and disease. One was a moral lapse and the other an infection by microbes. The prevention and cure of immorality was an educational process, but the treatment of the disease had to be tackled with scientific weapons. Therefore, two great objects had to be achieved—improved public morality and improved public health. The church must surely be in despair of its hold on the people if it clung to such a straw as the contention that the treatment of venereal diseases would tend to remove the fear of vice, and increase immorality. It was time that sex hygiene was taught candidly, and not in the furtive manner which has been adopted. (Applause).

Dr Molesworth, of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, said the effort to deal with the problem from a medical point of view alone, was practically hopeless. The sociological and educational aspects were more important than the medical treatment. From his experience he knew that the disease should be tackled from all sides.

Mr Dooley says, "Prohibition may not entirely prohibit, but it has made drink wrong to take, hard to get, and terrible bad when you get it."

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