

## THE EMPIRE AND THE WORLD ABROAD

### "Sewer" and "Drain" Defined in England.

A bill introduced by Mr. Harwood-Banner, M.P., at the request of the Association of Municipal Corporations and of the Urban District Councils Association, England, seeks to amend the definitions of "sewer" and "drain" in the Public Health Acts. The bill provides that a drain shall be one constructed on private land by the landowner or builder, and that a sewer shall be one which has either been constructed by the local authority or has been laid along a public street; with this important exception, however, that where a drain has been constructed by a builder or landowner along a private street — that is to say, along a street which has become a highway, but which is not repairable by the local authority — the drain is to be a sewer, provided it has been constructed to the satisfaction of the local authority.

### Mortality Amongst Rand Miners.

The mortality and illness due to the inhalation of dust by workers in the Rand Gold Mines and on the surface is exercising public opinion in South Africa.

It would seem that the disease causing havoc to the Rand mine workers is identical or closely resembling "Ganister Disease." The remedies appear to be:—1. Application of a powerful water jet during boring. 2. Application of a fine water spray or steam during the process of crushing or breaking, such spray or steam to be applied at the points where the dust is generated. 3. Ample time to be allowed for dust to settle after blasting. 4. Efficient underground mechanical ventilation. Simple as this may appear difficulties have to be faced. Legislation of a very stringent character will alone cause the workers to use appliances for their own safety. Heat at the deepest workings will cause objection to moisture, for it is well known that work in a hot moist atmosphere is not only uncomfortable, but injurious to health. The Statutory Regulations dated December 21, 1911, applying to cotton cloth factories prohibit artificial humidification when the wet bulb of the hygrometer exceeds 75 deg. F. Yet miners accustomed to heat, and wearing little clothing, could pro-

bably work in a moist atmosphere exceeding this reading. Mechanical ventilation could doubtless be fixed by skilled ventilating engineers, which would produce a reasonable working atmosphere. Dead ends would require special methods of ventilation, but the difficulties do not seem insuperable.

We are informed that in many of the Rand mines the above suggested remedies are largely in force with excellent results; but if the life of the miner is to be saved, no partial or half measures can succeed. To the casual observer it appears that the many persons living close to, even at the very foot of, the dust mountains of slimes adjoining the mines, must, especially in windy weather, inhale enormous quantities of dust. This question probably will, and eventually must, occupy the attention of the sanitary authorities.

### The Public Health of Peru.

As a manifestation of the progress of Peru in recent years nothing could be more eloquent than the important work accomplished by the service of national and international hygiene and by the increasingly active and effective intervention of the State in matters of public health.

Public hygiene, primarily in the exclusive charge of municipal institutions, whose local influence was necessarily restricted and lacking in combination, was later on directed by the General Health Regulation. This tended to organize the services more fully and comprehensively by bringing together the various elements of which they were composed and by authorizing the creation of a new body with directive powers, connected with the executive in order that it might be provided with the funds and the authority which it required.

This new body was the Supreme Board of Health, which controlled the departmental and provincial boards and whose legal principle was the regulation before-mentioned. But this first step in the direction of the true sanitary organization of the country had, for various reasons, but little result. Its establishment did not appreciably modify the sanitary conditions of the country, nor did it succeed in augmenting or making more effective the