

for limiting the districts, especially in cities, to be embraced by the respective coroners, and thus prevent the unseemly scramble that sometimes takes place to get possession of the body for the purposes of an inquest.

COMPULSORY REGISTRATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The title of this article formed the subject of an able address by Dr. J. W. Moore, before the Dublin branch of the British Medical Association, in which he reviewed the progress that has been made with regard to disease registration. Some extracts from this paper may prove interesting, especially as the subject is attracting no little attention in Canada at the present time. It is evident that if we wish to gain a true knowledge of the health of the people it is necessary that we should have some means whereby we may know what diseases prevail. The death rate is acknowledged to be insufficient for this purpose even in England, where the returns of mortality are published weekly. What shall we say then of Canada, where in some provinces, registration of deaths is not even compulsory, while in others, Ontario for instance, the returns are only made available about two years after the events occurred which are there recorded?

"Viewed as a problem in political economy, there can be no doubt regarding the paramount importance of ascertaining the actual sanitary state of a population at a given time. Death is one thing—disease is essentially another. An epidemic of influenza or of *rotheln*, characterized perhaps by a very low percentage of mortality, may, notwithstanding, by its mere excessive prevalence, paralyze a community to a far greater degree than a very fatal, yet limited outbreak of cholera." "Difficulties, no doubt stand in the way of carrying out an effective system of disease-registration; but they are not insurmountable, and the fact that several European governments have long since inaugurated and prosecuted such a system should encourage us in essaying to follow their example." Dr. Moore however advocates a compulsory notification of cases of infectious diseases to the sanitary authorities, as well as the general registration and publication of the tabulated results at frequent intervals. Parliamentary powers have been sought and obtained by fifteen

towns in England and Scotland for the carrying out of the part relating to compulsory notification, but little has been done in regard to the registration of disease. The notification of the existence of infectious diseases is made compulsory on the occupier or person having the management or control of the building in which the disease occurs. The medical practitioner on being called in is compelled to fill up, sign, and deliver to the occupier or person, etc., a certificate of which the following is a sample:

" ——— Improvement Act ——— Section ———

Pursuant to the above mentioned Act, I hereby certify and declare that, in my opinion, the under-mentioned person is suffering from a disease within the terms of the said Act.

(Signed) Medical Practitioner duly Registered.

1. Name of person suffering from the disease.
2. Situation of building wherein such person is.
3. Name of occupier or person having the management or control of the building.
4. Nature of the disease.

Take notice that this certificate must be delivered at the office of the Sanitary authority (to the clerk or servant of the authority in attendance there) under a penalty not exceeding ——— pounds."

The blank forms for these certificates are furnished by the authorities to the medical practitioner, and for each case he reports he receives a fee varying from one shilling in some places, to two shillings and sixpence. The sanitary authorities are to report the existence of any disease of which they are notified, and to post in public places any order in reference to the same.

The provisions thus made for obtaining a knowledge of the existence of diseases which are considered to be dangerous to public health generally, are such as should meet with the support of all who wish to see epidemics nipped in the bud, and contagious or infectious diseases quickly exterminated. The time is rapidly approaching when measures for the prevention of disease will be general throughout the world, and we may reasonably expect that the death-rate from preventable causes will be considerably diminished.

There is no reason why on this continent public health affairs should not be most successfully dealt with, and we hope to see the time when the interchange of reports with the United States, regarding the existence of contagious or infectious diseases, will be regarded by our Government as being one of the most important features of protection.