

possible in a way neither imagined nor imaginable twenty or thirty years ago. The staff available in our local health departments has grown in numbers and efficiency, while vaccine lymph can now be made and stored in practically unlimited quantity and be supplied at the shortest notice. As finality in these methods has not yet been reached, and other improvements will, no doubt, be made, it has now become quite arguable that administration on present lines should suffice to keep epidemic smallpox within small dimensions, whether the country has been well vaccinated in infancy or not, and that so long as administration remains good and people consent to be vaccinated in emergency, systematic vaccination may cease without serious consequences. This is no doubt the popular view, and its danger, paradoxically, lies in the fact that a good deal can be said for it. It must be remembered that even the best schemes of administration may break down, and should the breakdown occur with smallpox in a virulent phase, an 1871 type of smallpox for example, the result among a totally unprotected community may be much more serious than that of any local breakdowns of which we have had recent experience. As the behaviour and occurrence of smallpox is full of surprises, it is only fair that parents should be encouraged to protect their children from risk, while the more children and adults there are in the population who possess the protection of vaccination and revaccination the better the security of the community against smallpox and the better for the individuals who are protected. For such reasons we think most medical men would say that, notwithstanding altered conditions of recent years, it would still be advisable for the state to strengthen its vaccination laws, or if politically this is impossible, at least not to weaken such methods as remain for promoting systematic vaccination.

At the present moment it is useful to indicate in such obvious terms as the foregoing the position of medical science to some modern aspects of practical vaccination problems; and a book which has just appeared, written by Dr. C. K. Millard, the medical officer of health of Leicester, calls for notice in this connection. In some respects Dr. Millard takes what we believe is an exceptional view of the vaccination question. He would do away with systematic infancy vaccination as soon as possible, arguing that though it may be good for the individual it is actually prejudicial to the community, as it results in the presence among adults of cases of smallpox which are so mild that they are not easily recognized, and consequently go about and spread infection. We are not sure that this contention is complete on its epidemiological