

THE CONGRESS OF THE SANITARY INSTITUTE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

(Extracts from papers read—from Sanitary Record.)

ON THE NECESSITY OF PLUMBERS AND BUILDERS POSSESSING A COMPETENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAWS OF HEALTH AS BEARING ON THEIR RESPECTIVE OCCUPATIONS. BY J. A. RUSSELL, M.A. M.B., B.SC. (PUBLIC HEALTH).

THE need of healthy dwellings is so patent that it is wonderful nothing has yet been done to instruct those who make and fit them up for us. We must remember that no trades are exposed to such temptation as those of the builder and plumber. A good plumber must be a man of more than ordinary honesty of character. The temptation to scamp the workmanship and material can only be realized if we consider that he is safe from any criticism ; for the work is hidden from view, the public for whom it is done understand nothing about it, and are so repelled by the nastiness of the subject that there is no danger of their inquiring or examining too closely, and as for the "hands," all they know is, that they are working in the same way as their neighbours. It is in vain to pass Acts of Parliament, or frame regulations, while there is no intelligent public opinion in the trade to enforce them. The education of the workmen themselves is the true remedy. I am aware that it is supposed the English workman or soldier should obey and not think. But this old rule will no longer do. Intelligent work is required from the lowest grade in the army of labour. It is a most significant fact that officers of the Prussian army before Metz were required to give lectures to their privates, explaining the operations in which they were engaged. If workmen were aware of the loss of energy and illness entailed by the escape of sewage gas into dwellings, not to speak of the fearful results which may occur from specific disease, surely very few would be so heartless as to join lead pipes without solder, or put cement only on the top or exposed side of the joint in an internal drain, leaving the sides open. As it is, the greatest evil they can see from such a proceeding is the risk of a slight smell which they would think nothing of themselves, and consequently cannot sympathize with what they consider the over refinement that objects to it. Men who knew something of the effects of damp sub soil and walls, and the porous nature of brick and mortar, would, in general, take some trouble to have sub-soil drainage and damp-proof courses really effective. Moreover, by educating the ordinary hands, not only should we raise the standard of individual work, and create a public opinion in the trade, but we should provide the best possible check upon the doings of those men and masters who dared to scamp. The danger of falling into the hands of the sanitary authorities would be too great when every evil deed was observed by skilled witnesses.

ON THE PRESENT POSSIBILITIES OF SANITARY LEGISLATION. BY MR. R. BRUDENELL-CARTER.

After referring to the contagium of zymotic diseases, he said : It was perfectly conceivable that the poison of these diseases might not