

DISCUSSION.

DR. JAMES ROBERTS, M.O.H. (Hamilton, Ont.).—It is now little more than a year since our first systematic attempt was made at medical inspection of schools in this city, and even with the limited resources and facilities at our disposal for the carrying on of the work I think we can truthfully say that the results have been somewhat gratifying. Until recently our school inspection was limited to the control of communicable diseases, and, as I pointed out in my annual report, it is simply remarkable how much can be accomplished along this line with the assistance and co-operation of the teachers alone. When I undertook, at the request of the Board, of Education, something over a year ago an inquiry into the physical conditions of our school children, I was somewhat doubtful as to the urgency of this work in a city of our population and social characteristics. It is not difficult to unhesitatingly concur in the findings of those who have investigated conditions as they exist in the large and intensely congested centres, and I must confess that only personal investigation could ever have convinced me of the great importance of an early recognition on the part of the authorities and the public in general that the health of our school population is not all that could be desired. The multitudinous duties of a Health Officer in a city of even this size rendered it impossible for me to do more than merely touch the fringe of the work.

For some months past our school nurse has devoted her whole time to it, and has proved herself a capable and intelligent inspector. I am glad to be able to say that there has been at all times the heartiest co-operation with our department. Communicable diseases were never more promptly and completely recorded—the exclusion of these where present in school never so thorough, and a great many defects have been pointed out to parents—a considerable proportion of which have been remedied.

We have been able to accomplish a great deal toward the eradication of pediculosis, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, etc., which exist to an extent unrealized by those not specially interested in the subject. Our teachers concede that as a result of inspection in personal cleanliness, tidiness, and general morale of the pupils, we have gained a great deal. The establishment of a dental infirmary, which would do something for the deplorable condition of the 75 per cent. of school children's mouths is greatly to be desired, as is also some provision whereby defects in vision, which even on rough examination are found to exist to a surprising extent, may be remedied. Just at this point arises our chief difficulty. On all sides this school inspection is looked upon as a good thing. All