

Modern Sanitation

The Royal Sanitary Institute

The Royal Sanitary Institute, though it has its headquarters at Buckingham Palace Road, London, England, is not by any means a purely English body, for it has Branches and Examination Boards established in almost every part of the British Dominions; and in the Dominion of Canada, Boards of Examiners have been formed and are being extended in four of the Provinces.

The aim of the Institute is the promotion of Sanitary Science in all its branches, and the diffusion of knowledge relating thereto. The Institute was founded as far back as 1876, just after the passing of the first great Public Health Act in England, and at that time the number of those who took much interest in sanitary matters was quite small. The Institute started with a Membership of 100, but its growth was steady, and in 1888; it amalgamated with another body working on similar lines, "the Parkes Museum of Hygiene". Since that time, owing in large measure to the results of its work in stimulating interest in matters of hygiene and sanitation, it has continued to grow rapidly, until now its Membership is over 4,500, and includes representatives from almost every country in the world.

One of the most striking results of the Institute's educational work may be traced in the broad meaning now attaching to the terms "Sanitation" and "Hygiene". In the early days of the Institute it was difficult to persuade the ordinary layman that sanitation meant anything more than good drainage, and the avoidance of bad smells; "sewers" and "sanitation" were regarded as synonymous terms; but nowadays the activities which are carried on by the Public Health Departments of our advanced Municipalities are infinitely varied and comprehensive. The inspection of dwellings; the control of infectious disease; the supervision of the food and milk supply; the care of Infant Life; the health of school children; the cleansing of towns; the purification of water; the treatment of sewage; all these and many other matters of detail come within the purview of the modern sanitary officer. In fact the sphere of modern sanitation extends from before birth,—in the care of expectant motherhood—throughout life, and after death—in the proper disposal of the dead.

In this widening of the field of sanitation the work of the Royal Sanitary Institute in preparing and examining men for the service of the Public Health Departments of our large Cities has undoubtedly played an important part. This educational work has created a public sense of the importance of hygiene, and the Institute has at the same time met the demand arising from this popular interest in health matters, by providing a class of certificated officers qualified to undertake the care of the sanitation of the cities. Examinations for Sanitary Inspectors were started by the Institute in Great Britain in 1877, and have been held regularly since then in practically every important town in the British Isles, and in British South Africa, in all the States of the Commonwealth of Australia, in the Dominion of New Zealand, and in Hong Kong; while in Canada several Examinations have already been held in Montreal and Winnipeg.

In addition to the special Examinations for Sanitary Inspectors, the Institute grants certificates in Sanitary Science as applied to Buildings and Public Works, and in School Hygiene for Teachers and others. Examinations are also arranged for Inspectors of Meat and other Foods, for Smoke Inspectors, and for Women Health Visitors and School Nurses. In India the Insti-

tute works in conjunction with the Government of the Bombay Presidency in holding Examinations for Sanitary Surveyors. These Examinations are specially helpful to Municipalities, as they afford a standard qualification for public health appointments, and in practically all cases in England, and in some cases in the Dominions, the possession of the certificate is made obligatory for persons desirous of obtaining positions as Sanitary Inspectors under Municipal authorities.

There are many other sides to the Institute's work, such as the holding of Training Courses for Sanitary Officers; and the arranging of large Congresses both in Great Britain, and in various cities in the British Dominions with the help of the Colonial Branches, at which all matters relating to sanitary administration and practice are brought under discussion; these meetings afford most valuable opportunities for the interchange of ideas between various officers of the Public Health service.

A Journal of proceedings is published monthly, and copies are sent to all Members throughout the World; the Journal contains, besides the proceedings at the congress and meetings, original articles on Public Health questions, reviews of books, and general notes of interest to all those engaged in sanitary administration. A special Colonial Supplement to the Journal is published from time to time, containing papers read at the Congresses held by Branches of the Institute in various parts of the Empire, and contributed articles of general interest to Members in the Colonies. This also is sent free of charge to those Members.

With a view to extending this useful public work in Canada, Mr. E. Dolleymore recently visited several of the Provinces of the Dominion as a representative from the Institute, and arrangements were initiated for the establishment of Boards of Canadian Examiners in the Provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia. In Montreal Professor T. A. Starkey, of McGill University, has been associated with the work for some time with his training and examining work, and it is hoped that with the co-operation of Laval University a working scheme of training for Sanitary Officers will be drawn up. At Toronto, Dr. J. C. Hastings, the Medical Health Officer, is actively interesting himself in the formation of the Board for Ontario, and other prominent Health workers have promised their support. For Manitoba, a Board of Examiners has already been appointed, which includes the names of Dr. A. J. Douglas, Medical Officer of Health for the City of Winnipeg, Dr. R. W. Simpson, Chairman of the Provincial Board of Health, Dr. W. Gordon Bell, Provincial Bacteriologist, Prof. Brydone Jack, Mr. Pender West, and Mr. P. B. Tustin of the City Hall, Winnipeg, as Hon. Secretary. There is also a Branch of the Institute in British Columbia for which Mr. Lawrence Robertson of the City Hall, Vancouver, is acting as Hon. Secretary.

It is obvious that the adoption of a standard qualification recognised throughout the Empire for those entrusted with the sanitary inspection of our cities, will be of great benefit not only to the Officers themselves, but to the sanitary service and to the public generally. The Medical Officer of Health will be strengthened by having on his Staff, officers who have proved their knowledge of the duties they are called upon to perform, and the public will know that they are getting efficient inspection and administration in return for their appropriation to the Sanitary Department.