BRITISH JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL MEDICINE

LONDON, July, 1945

EDUCATION IN INDUSTRIAL HEALTH

The crux of the Report of the Royal College of Physicians of London on Industrial Medicine is the argument for a National Industrial Health Service, and the members of the committee responsible for the Report were much concerned with the training of the medical officers of this service. That training has now been considered in greater detail by the Education Committee of the Association of Industrial Medical Officers, and I am glad of an opportunity of giving a warm welcome to the report published in this issue.

The very existence of this country as a first-class power depends on the development of industry after the war. The mills admittedly grind slowly, but to anyone who has been concerned with the training of the medical profession for many years, as I have been, it is plain that it is to education that we must look for the ultimate solution of the many problems involved.

As the College Report emphasized, full efficiency in industry can only be achieved by contented producers, and such contentment implies the highest attainable level of physical and mental health. This in turn will demand the fullest co-operation of employers, workers, and all members of the medical profession. It is with the training of the last that the present report is concerned, and it covers the whole field of undergraduate and post-graduate education, not forgetting the training of nurses and the education of the layman. It is satisfactory to learn that the undergraduate is not to be burdened with yet another major subject. The suggestions for lectures and demonstrations are modest; it is more important that the 'teachers of medicine and surgery should themselves understand something of the principles of industrial health' that it may be part of their everyday instruction.

The College Report did not reach any final conclusion concerning a Diploma in Industrial Health, but the decisions of the Association's Committee seem to me wise, with their insistence on its limited use and on the broader aspects of post-graduate training in industrial health to secure a sound clinical background and to foster every opportunity for research. In the light of these decisions, it will obviously be the duty of the Royal College of Physicians at an early date to consider the establishment of a Diploma. Such action, if approved, would probably provide a useful stimulus to the development of more adequate facilities for education in industrial health. These facilities

would then become more widely available not only for a Diploma course, but also for training the part-time industrial medical officer and for the more advanced study necessary for the industrial consultant. In the words of a famous historian: 'The transitions of industry are always painful,' and it may well be that a painful phase faces this country no matter what political party is in control. It is the duty of the medical profession to equip itself to relieve pain and suffering, and in the industrial field the Association of Industrial Medical Officers has set out clearly how this may be achieved.

MORAN.

INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIAL MEDICINE

Since the last century Great Britain has amassed an extensive knowledge of industrial medicine and hygiene, both through its Government services and industrial medical officers and others working independently of state organizations. The industrial revolution came first in the old world to Great Britain, whose inhabitants had no precedents to guide them in safeguarding the health of work-people. Legislation to protect workers was developed as a result of the efforts of reformers, enlightened employers and trades unionists. At the beginning of the last century it was narrow in its scope and not rigidly enforced. But to-day the Factories Act and other Acts and regulations protect all who work in factories and mines, and are enforced by His Majesty's Inspectors who observe and record the effects on safety and health of many different types of work and conditions. This legislation bears comparison with that of any other country in the world, as does the means of enforcing it. In peace-time the knowledge collected by the Factory and Mines Inspectorate has to some extent been made available to other countries through the International Labour Office. This body, unlike the International Health Organization, survived the shipwreck of the League of Nations. It has two principal duties: the drafting of conventions and recommendations to Governments with the object of protecting the health of workers throughout the world, and the collection and dissemination of information on industrial health which is likely to be of international interest. More than thirty international conventions have been concluded and ratified by states large and small. There are those relating to the use of white lead for example, and to compensation for occupational diseases; in addition detailed recommendations have been submitted to Governments on the protection of the worker against anthrax, white phosphorus and lead poisoning. The International Labour Office has also maintained a continuous review of industrial medicine and hygiene published under the name of 'Occupation and Health'.

Before the war the International Labour Office arranged every four years a World Congress on Industrial Accidents and Occupational Diseases. These Congresses should be revived after the war