

The Advertiser

ADELAIDE: TUESDAY,
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HIGH COST OF HEALTH

Although, when the matter was ventilated the other day at the Melbourne Medical Congress, no proof was forthcoming that, in all the circumstances, the fees charged by Australian medical practitioners are extortionate, several questions of pressing importance were raised by the discussion. Whatever argument may be adduced to confound him, no one could accuse Dr. Dain, of Birmingham, of lack of courage, after his assault on the Australian scale of medical fees. He declared that the fees charged for private medical service in this country were so high as to drive people to consult chemists and herbalists, and through the public hospital clinics. He declared that half a guinea was too much to charge for a consultation about a child's stomachache, particularly when there would probably be an additional sum of 3/6 due to the chemist for a bottle of medicine. His own basic charge for such medical attention, he said, was half a crown; and numbers of English doctors did their own dispensing, particularly in the country. Dr. Dain found it anomalous that lodge doctors in Melbourne should receive only £1 a year for attention to a whole family. He dwelt at some length upon the national health insurance scheme which operates in England, and the principles of which subsequent speakers from abroad declared should be applied in Australia.

National insurance as a topic of controversy is not by any means new to Australia; and numerous proposals in this connection have been placed before the Federal Government from time to time. The project is even now receiving the attention of the Cabinet; and it has been reported that a draft plan will shortly be submitted to the States for their consideration. Whatever project is advanced from Canberra must be governed by considerations of finance. Of the gain that would accrue to individuals outside the community from national health insurance properly administered, there can be little question; but the cost of such a gigantic venture into State socialism might well give the most adventurous Treasurer pause. The question which must arise in Australia, is how to create the reservoir from which insurance benefits would be paid. The worker on a fixed wage scale would probably be disposed to resist a proposal that he should make weekly contributions, which would be in the nature of a tax upon his earnings. Whatever scheme were adopted, moreover, only a part of the amount now spent by the Federal Government upon pensions would be saved; and the likelihood is, therefore, that the main burden of national insurance would fall upon the taxpayer. Dr. Dain would fix the maximum age limit for participation in national insurance at 200 years; and as 83 per cent. of the population would thus be potential beneficiaries, the charge upon consolidated revenue might well be enormous.

Yet logic argues that some way of escape from the situation which inspired Dr. Dain's remarks to the B.M.A. meeting will eventually have to be found. The reply of Australian doctors to the visitors' strictures is that the giving of free and next-to-free service to some sections of the community makes it necessary to impose correspondingly high charges upon those who can afford to pay. This seems an obvious enough principle. Although obvious doctors protest that their fees appear excessive merely because so many people receive free hospital attention, Dr. Dain's answer is that the high fees are themselves driving people to the

hospitals. The question seems to be, as in the case of the chicken and the egg, which came first? And where will the process end? It was carried to its logical conclusion, we might expect eventually to reach the stage at which the whole community, save one wealthy man, would receive free medical attention at the expense of the only paying patient left. The solution of the problem may lie somewhere between a scheme of national health insurance and a system of intermediate hospitals, the latter possibly supported by potential patients on a co-operative basis, or by the fees of patients who would pay according to their means. No idealist would favour the introduction of any scheme of nationalisation which would deny the community the inestimable benefits of the essentially human element in the practice of medicine and the conduct of the hospital system.

News 6-9-35 DOCTORS TO CONFER Visitors Arrive From Britain 8 SEP. 1935 NOTED VISUES

SYDNEY, Friday. AMONG the British doctors who reached Sydney in the Aorangi today, bound for the 10th annual meeting of the British Medical Association in Melbourne, is a toxicologist, whose evidence played a big part in convicting Dr. Crippen of the murder of his wife in London in 1910. The visitors also include an Australian-born specialist, who says that Australians are making their marks in the world of medicine in general, and an orthopedic specialist, keen to visit Australia's fine beaches, because he has been suffering from rheumatism and sunshine is wonderful cure.

There are more than 250 people in the party, which includes some of the most famous medical men in Britain and their families. Australia will thus meet a number of specialists whose names are household words.

TWENTY WOMEN In spite of the eminence of its members, the party is notable about the delegation. The doctors hope to have a pleasant time in Australia before returning to Europe by way of the East.

The unofficial leader is Dr. S. Watson Smith, of Bourne-mouth, the retiring president, who will hand over his duties to Sir James Barrett, the new president. Many of the members—20 of them are women—are general practitioners, and many are specialists. Two of them are men extraordinarily broad physically and professionally. One is Dr. Harry Souttar who, besides being a distinguished surgeon and radium expert, is chairman of a representative body of the B.M.A. The other is Dr. Francis Muecke, a South Australian, who is posted in London as an eye, ear, nose, and throat surgeon. Dr. Muecke is big in record and physically.

When he graduated from Adelaide University in 1902 he set out for London to take his F.R.C.S. degree, and on the way became engaged to Miss Ada Crossley, the singer. He has remained in London ever since, and is senior surgeon of the eye, ear, nose, and throat section at the London Hospital.

An older man, of quiet distinction is Sir William Wilcox, the well-known Home Office medical adviser, who is reputed to be probably the greatest toxicologist in the world. He figured in the Crippen case, and Dr. Souttar, an expert witness in many other murder cases has been featured in books.

The president of the medicine section of the delegation is Lord Horder, physician in ordinary to the Prince of Wales, who will arrive in the Monterey.

News 7-9-35 IS BAFELING DOCTORS 7 SEP. 1935 "Pink" Disease

"PINK" disease, an affliction of children which is puzzling the medical profession, will be one of the topics discussed at the forthcoming B.M.A. congress in Melbourne, said Dr. R. Hutchison, an eminent English doctor who arrived at Outer Harbor in the Anchises today.

Dr. Hutchison, who is president of the Royal Society of Medicine, London, will preside over the children's diseases section of the congress.

Nothing was known of the cause of "pink" disease, which, though not actually common in its incidence, seemed to be more prevalent in Australia than in England or other parts of the world, he said.

It was an odd kind of disease, affecting children from 18 months to two years of age. Their hands and feet assumed a curious pink color, and the sufferers wasted and became very miserable.

About 25 per cent. of the victims died, the remainder recovering after a few months. Up to the present, no specific treatment had been evolved.

NEXT CONGRESS IN S. AFRICA

Dr. Hutchison confessed that he thought it unlikely that a solution of the problem would be reached at the congress—as a rule such results were not obtained at congresses.

His successor, possibly holds the record for attendance at overseas con-

gresses of the new year which the meeting will open. The annual meeting was opened in London before the count and officers of the association left for Australia, and there much of the routine business was completed, leaving the advertised annual meeting at Melbourne free for the B.M.A. The meeting will be held in the Town Hall on Tuesday morning. The proceedings tomorrow will be largely informal, but the visitors will be busy. The meetings will end officially on Friday. The Adelaide audience has brought Dr. Hutchison's "flying doctor" who began his journey by air-rail from Brisbane to attend the meeting. He will address the medical sociology section on Thursday morning on serial medical services in Australia, which are unique. Dr. Vickers was met at Spencer street station by Dr. George Simpson; the first "flying doctor" who is at present associated with the headquarters of the organization, and the founder of his services, was Dr. John Fern, better known to Australians as "Flynn of the Inland." He has been appointed a vice-president of the section in recognition of his services, although he is not a medical man.

The programme tomorrow is as follows:

2.15 p.m.—Hobbies exhibition opened (golf school); radio display opened (analysis school).

3 p.m.—Demonstration of Australian fauna.

4 p.m.—Civic reception, Town Hall.

4.15 p.m.—Reception by Victorian Medical Women's Society.

8.30 p.m.—Reception by Premier and State Government at the Legislative Gallery.

News 12-9-35 NO JUDGES ARE UNBIASED Provocative View Of Doctor B.M.A. CONGRESS

MELBOURNE, Thursday.

THERE is no such person as an unbiased judge," said Dr. R. S. Ellery in an address on crime and delinquency at the medical sociology section of the B.M.A. congress, which considered the social aims of mental hygiene.

Denouncing present methods of dealing with crime as unproductive of evil, Dr. Ellery declared that the prevention of crime was a task centred in the study of the delinquent child. He declared that this study should be undertaken by child guidance clinics and psychiatrists working in conjunction with the judicial courts.

A judge's every judgment is tainted by the inhibitions and conflicts which corrode in his sub-conscious," said Dr. Ellery. "When he punishes a criminal he is punishing something criminal in his own mind."

The severity of the punishment necessary to support his own self-respect. When he metes out a flogging to his own sub-conscious tendency to commit the same crime."

PUNISHMENT NOT CURE

Stating that punishment did not cure the criminal and that it was doubtful whether it had any marked deterrent action on others, Dr. Ellery said that it was necessary to alter the community's attitude toward crime and punishment.

Individual maladjustments which were conditioning criminal behaviour, he said, could be found and cured, and the manufacture of criminals should be prevented as far as possible by attacking the problems of juvenile delinquency in an enlightened and scientific manner.

In a talk on stammering among school children, Prof. Harvey Sutton, of Sydney University, told the medical sociology section that in New South Wales about one in 40 boys showed disorders of speech, chiefly stammering. He said that the majority of these children experienced speech difficulty, and that as a rule not to any marked degree.

In Australia very little has been achieved in an organized field of medical work with the defect, which may markedly influence the individual's personality and possibly his occupational chances," he said.



Dr. R. HUTCHINSON, president of the Royal Society of Medicine, London, who is travelling to Melbourne in the Anchises to attend the annual British Medical Association congress, beginning on Monday.

gresses of the B.M.A. There have been three so far, all in Canada, and he has been to all, beginning in 1897. It was not until 1927 that he was able to hold one in South Africa, in 1940. Congresses are held annually in England.

After the Melbourne gathering, Dr. Hutchison will, in Sydney, deliver the first Sir Herbert Mailland memorial oration. Sir Herbert was a Sydney surgeon.

Dr. Hutchison retired last year from the position of senior physician in London's Hospital, London, and the London Hospital.

News 9-9-35 EMINENT MEDICAL MEN IN MELBOURNE 9 SEP. 1935 B.M.A. Meeting To Open Today

MELBOURNE, September 8. The most important conference of the medical men ever held in Australia will begin in Melbourne tomorrow morning. By land, sea, and air doctors have arrived to attend it. Some came from other States and from overseas last week, the week-end was busy with the coming of others, and the last parties will arrive tomorrow morning. Englishmen by the Aorangi and South Africa by the Anchises. The occasion is the 10th annual meeting of the British Medical Association, to be held in the Southern Hemisphere for the first time in the 103 years of the association's history.

This was the medical profession's way of paying homage to Melbourne, the first time in its history, and to mark the occasion the association has elected Sir James Barrett, a Melbourne doctor, to be its president for