

man appointed to have the right to the title of State Medical Officer. That in itself would be a valuable asset. The members of the profession holding club appointments, being otherwise properly qualified, should in the first instance be appointed in country districts, and where suitable; but gradually in large towns there should be established clinics, with whole-time medical officers, admitted to the Service by examination, with good expectations of promotion, and in old age a pension.

The control of Friendly Societies has been objected to. I have shown that the control of a Health Committee would be practically the same thing, or worse, yet it is perfectly certain that there must be control, and I venture to say that such control should only be in the hands of a Secretary of State, responsible to Parliament. Friendly Societies and Health Committees will be certain to be interested, and their advice will in many cases be valuable, but I think it will be agreed that they should have no power over medical officers of the State, who should be called upon to do their duty without fear or favour.

It must be remembered that under the Bill the State will be very largely interested, as also every class of employer and employed, and it must be essential to the financial success of the Act that only those assured persons who are really disabled by ill-health are allowed to obtain benefit. On the Friendly Societies and Health Committees will be cast the duty of dispensing the weekly payments, and they will have to depend, in the first instance, on the certificates of the medical officers attending the assured.

I yield to no one in my belief in the honesty of the great mass of the working classes. I have seen in numberless cases the greatest anxiety to get back to work, but I have also been obliged to come in contact with many cases of exaggerated claims or absolute malingering. Seeing that the Act will apply to a much greater number of persons than ever were dealt with under the Workmen's Compensation Act, it is impossible to ignore the fact, that there must be a large amount of malingering under the National Insurance Act, unless provision is made for dealing with it from the very beginning. Medical officers with every desire to do right will have, in any case, a delicate duty to perform in discriminating between just and unjust claims, and they should be subjected to no outside influence which might by any stretch of imagination be supposed to bias their judgment.

Again, the profession is not only interested in medical officers attending the employed. There must be medical men appointed as referees to act when the condition of an insured person is in dispute, and these referees, if they are to retain the confidence of the public, must be absolutely unbiased and above any sort of influence, exerted by either Friendly Societies desirous of reducing claims on their funds, or by assured persons exaggerating their disability or inventing it.

I feel sure that medical officers can only obtain a position, unsubjected to outside influence, by appointment by the State, and controlled only by a State department, the head of which is responsible to Parliament.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

South Hampstead, Sept. 25th, 1911.

ALBERT BENTHALL.

CONDENSED MILKS IN THE INFANT DIETARY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Whilst agreeing with your very timely and wholesome condemnation of the low grade machine-skimmed condensed milks as foods for children, I fear the casual reader will mistake your remarks for an attack on condensed milk in general. Milk, to be a desirable food, must contain all its natural fat, but that is not all; it must also be clean. The commodity sold by the itinerant milkmen is never very clean and often revoltingly dirty, as was shown by the late Mr. Ernest Hart.¹

Some of the pasteurised milk sold is unfit for food by the time it reaches the consumer. In January of last year a sample of pasteurised milk was seized by the authorities of

St. Marylebone and found to contain 22,415,000 germs per cubic centimetre, with other etceteras, including pus. The high-grade condensed milks sold in every grocer's shop throughout the country are clean, and in this lies their value when compared with the fresh milk ordinarily sold. Many more children have been killed by filthy fresh milk than ever contracted rickets from being fed on Swiss or other good brand of full-cream condensed milk. It is one thing to diagnose rickets in a child fed on condensed milk, but quite another to prove that the condensed milk caused the rickets.

The late Dr. H. Asby wrote²—

I do not doubt that a good condensed milk is better and more wholesome for the infant than much of the so-called fresh milk which is retailed to the poorer classes in our large cities; and it is a useful substitute for fresh milk when, as often happens in the summer, the milk-supply is swarming with micro-organisms.

In a properly managed condensery all the milk employed is obtained from carefully selected and regularly inspected farms; after the addition of the sugar it is condensed in a vacuum pan at a temperature of 120° F. Surely this is far less likely to injure milk than the rough and ready sterilisation to which fresh milk is subjected in the domestic saucepan. My own five children began to take Swiss milk when only a few days old, and none of them have shown any signs of rickets. I have seen hundreds of other people's children similarly fed, and equally healthy. By all means let us order fresh milk whenever we can do so with confidence, but not unless we can truthfully say that fresh milk is clean milk.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

London, S.E., Sept. 23rd, 1911.

JOHN ROUND.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—At a general meeting of the Condensed Milk Clearing House and Defence Association held this day, at which all the principal manufacturers and importers of skimmed milk (representing 95 per cent. of that trade) were present, the recent report of Dr. Coutts to the Local Government Board was considered, also the article which appeared in your issue of Sept. 16th.

The manufacturers and dealers in skimmed condensed milk have no desire to represent the article as other than it is. They label it "machine-skimmed milk" in accordance with the requirements of the legislature, and they do not desire to represent that it is in ordinary cases a suitable food for young infants; but they strongly resent the suggestion that it should be labelled "unfit for infants' food," as they consider that this would convey a false impression that it is unwholesome, and it would unnecessarily injure the sale of a useful and cheap article of food, which is a great boon to the working classes.

The meeting considered the wording proposed by the writer of your leading article and they desired me to express their thanks for the suggestion, not only because it conveys in an unobjectionable form all the Local Government Board report proposes, but it defines very happily the period during which condensed milk should be avoided in infant feeding. The following resolution was unanimously passed and will immediately be carried into effect:—

Resolved that all labels on tins of machine-skimmed condensed milk in addition to the words "machine skimmed" as required by the legislature shall bear in clear type the words "not a substitute for mothers' milk" in accordance with the suggestion made by THE LANCET.

I am, Sir yours faithfully,

U. A. CLEEVE, Chairman.

69, Mark-lane, London, E.C., Sept. 26th, 1911.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have read with considerable interest Dr. F. J. H. Coutts's report to the Local Government Board on condensed milk and your leading article thereon. I take it that this represents the medical view of condensed milk, but I think the commercial side of the question is also worthy of your consideration.

The condensing of machine-skimmed milk is the utilisation of the otherwise waste product of butter-making. Skimmed milk can only be used for the feeding of pigs, preparation of skimmed cheese, making of milk-powder or machine-skimmed milk, and of these the latter is probably

¹ Brit. Med. Jour., vol. i., 1897, p. 1167.

For details of the bacteriological and chemical examination of various brands of condensed milk see "Condensed Milk," by H. Dold and E. Garrett, *Journal of Royal Institute of Public Health*, 1910, vol. xviii., p. 294.

² Ashby, *Health in the Nursery*, p. 101.

the most valuable and the most easily assimilated form. All the manufacturers of condensed skimmed milk are butter manufacturers, and derive the bulk of their profits from the butter part of the undertaking.

Dr. Coutts states that he finds there is a considerable consumption of machine-skimmed milk for infant feeding, but he gives no figures whatever to prove his contention; in fact, the only figures given show that the total amount of infants fed on condensed milk is only 3.1 per cent. in Brighton (all kinds), 8.4 per cent. in Derby (all kinds), and in Salford 0.4 per cent. (skimmed only).

The manufacturers of machine-skimmed milk are convinced that only a very small part—probably only 1 per cent.—of their condensed milk is used as a sole food for infants, and every indirect test (since a direct test is impossible) tends to confirm this view. The other 99 per cent. are used for ordinary household purposes where the absence of fat is either unimportant or even desirable. It is nearly always used undiluted, and in a form which Dr. Coutts admits to be an unfavourable medium for the development of many bacteria. If it were correct, as stated by the Select Committee on Food Adulteration, that machine-skimmed milk was largely used for infant feeding, the effect of the notification on the label that the milk was machine skimmed should have lessened the consumption, but, on the contrary, it increased. It increased still more when a few years ago all the manufacturers who are members of the Condensed Milk Clearing House Association voluntarily decided they would henceforth put on their labels an indication that machine-skimmed milk was not suitable as sole food for infants, and such increase would not have taken place had any large proportion been used for this purpose.

The manufacturers of this article would probably have no objection whatever to stating on their labels that the milk is "not a substitute for mothers' milk," as suggested by you, since they have never sold it for that purpose; but the words which are often suggested, viz., "unfit for infants," are objected to, as it is felt that nine-tenths of the persons who use this milk would assume that what was unfit for infants was also unfit for children and adults, and they would not be able to understand that the unfitness lies merely in the absence of fat, and that the age of the infant is a governing factor. This same article which is nutritively insufficient for a child of 3 months becomes, for a child of 3 years, an excellent food if spread on bread and butter, and, in the case of the poorer classes where cheapness is a leading consideration, it is in this way almost an ideal food. It is certainly better than jam or golden syrup, and cheaper than meat; it contains more proteids than bacon and nearly as much as fat mutton or other meats. The superiority of machine-skimmed condensed milk, used as suggested, over potted "delicacies" is so evident that it is remarkable that medical men have not more often advised it as an item in the dietary of poorer households.

I think it is scarcely fair to conclude your article with the words "the State should step in..... to render more difficult the commercial game of making things appear what they are not," thus suggesting that the manufacturers of machine-skimmed milk are endeavouring to foster its sale by misleading the public. I believe I am right in saying that they are the only manufacturers who describe as fully the article sold by them, and who point out the uses to which it should *not* be put. Your righteous condemnation of certain commercial methods would apply better to many of the patent foods which are advertised "for infants and invalids," and which are even less suitable than machine-skimmed condensed milk for the feeding of infants, at any rate so far as proportion of fat is concerned. I would refer you to Dr. R. Hutchison's book on "Food and the Principles of Dietetics," and many of your readers who condemn machine-skimmed milk would be surprised to find that patent foods they have recommended are even more incomplete.

I venture to say that no action should be taken with regard to the very limited sale of machine-skimmed condensed milk for infant feeding unless the same tests be applied to all patent or infant foods—whether sold under a fancy or proprietor's name or otherwise—and if a percentage of only $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or 1 per cent. of butter fat be a reason for labelling 100 tins of this milk "unfit for infant food" (of which only one is likely to be used for that purpose) that

any other so-called "infants' food" which contains too low a percentage of fat shall be labelled in the same way.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

CHAS. LEHMANN,

Director, R. Lehmann and Co., Limited.

Monument-street, E.C., Sept. 20th, 1911.

** We publish this letter with pleasure. The policy of the members of the Condensed Milk Clearing House Association is obviously an upright one, and no praise is needed from us for the honest label which they agreed to adopt. The manufacturers do not object to the use of machine-skimmed milk being discouraged as a substitute for mothers' milk and put words to that effect upon the label. We have already agreed that machine-skimmed condensed milk, apart from its fat, is a valuable food, and our correspondent rightly draws attention to its useful applications in this direction. We agree, also, that there are several preparations upon the market masquerading as foods suitable for the suckling, which are totally unfit for the purpose, not only because they show a deficiency of fat, but because in several of them raw starch is present. On the other hand, some at least of these foods are clearly intended to be used as adjuvants to the milk diet, the directions on the label clearly stating that milk is to be added to the food before it is ready for the infants' use. Such a direction would, of course, appear superfluous in the case of a machine-skimmed product called milk. As a rule, however, the price asked for such foods is a good deal more than that commonly demanded for a tin of machine-skimmed milk. The great cheapness of skimmed condensed milk, which after all, as our correspondent points out, is a by-product in butter-making, is a strong reason for protecting the very poor from ignorantly using it to fulfil cheaply an object which it never can fulfil. The whole question of the sale of infant foods for rich and poor alike calls for a controlling measure to protect the public from acting upon statements which misrepresent physiological facts.—ED. L.

DESICCATED ANTIVARIOLOUS VACCINE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In THE LANCET of Sept. 24th, 1910, there is an annotation, "The Influence of Age and Temperature on the Potency of Diphtheria Antitoxin." This may not have interested the most of your readers, who are within easy reach of manufactories of sera, but for a few thousands who are not so situated it is extremely interesting. In a previous number (May 21st) you had already published "A Note on Desiccated Culture Media," which was, I am sure, welcomed by many of us outsiders. With the same object in view—i.e., to be of service to practitioners abroad—I would call attention to an article published in the *Bulletin de la Société de Pathologie Exotique*, séance du 21 Juillet 1909, tome 2de, No. 7, par Pierre Achalme et Marie Phisalix, entitled "Contribution to the Study of the Preservation of Vaccine in Tropical Countries." The production (manufacture) of this desiccated vaccine appears to be simple, and its activity is guaranteed for one year at least, a future communication being promised as to longer duration. I am surprised that some institute has not taken up its manufacture. It would be a boon to many doctors and others.

In THE LANCET of Nov. 26th, 1910, in an article on "Sanitation in India," attention is called to the difficulty in preserving lymph, even with the use of thermos flasks. In the *Medical Record*, N.Y., May 14th, Dr. Heiser, director of health, at a meeting of the Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine, says that glycerinised lymph loses its efficacy in ten days. Previously, in the same periodical, another practitioner made a similar observation. Even in Peru, where there has been a vaccine institute for more than 12 years, there is an extensive field for the use of desiccated vaccine. Some portions of the Republic are more than a month's journey from the capital; many others have no doctor, and even if