

LAY CONTROLLERS FOR MEDICAL WORK.

Only medical men can appreciate the tremendous handicap to which medical workers are subjected when they are placed under lay control. It is bad enough when medical men without any experience in public health are appointed to professorships in preventive medicine, but the appointment of a non-medical officer to the supreme control of the League of Red Cross Societies is a striking illustration of the manner in which malign influences may affect the activities of voluntary societies. In a recent letter to *The Times*, Dr. Halford Ross says:—

"The appointment of Sir David Henderson as Director-General of the League of Red Cross Societies presents an opportunity to discuss the question of the lay control of medical services. The aim of the International League is the prevention of certain preventable diseases—malaria, typhus, yellow-fever, ankylostomiasis, and others. These have already been prevented in many zones, invariably, I think, under the direction of doctors—Sir David Bruce, Sir Ronald Ross, Colonel Gorgas—and they have done it well. Yet now, when the League desires to do the same thing again on a larger scale, a layman is appointed, who, so far as I can discover, has no experience in the prevention of disease."

From 1913 to 1918 Sir David Henderson was Director-General of Military Aeronautics.

MENTAL DEFICIENCY ACT, SECTION 47.

The Government have decided to introduce a Bill to repeal the provisions of Section 47 of the Act which limits to £150,000 the annual exchequer grant towards the expenses incurred by Local Authorities in respect of defectives detained in institutions or placed under guardianship. The total grant assignable to each Local Authority has hitherto been subject to a fixed maximum representing the division of the £150,000 among various authorities on a population basis. Still further limitations have been introduced by the Board of Control by limiting cases dealt with to those which they define as "urgent." These limitations will now be withdrawn, and the Board of Control will pay to County and County Borough Councils one half of their net expenditure as approved by the Board.

The Board of Control suggest now that it is the duty of all Local Authorities to enter at once upon a vigorous administration of the Act.

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL.—The salary of Dr. R. D. Smedley, County Medical Officer, has been increased to £800 per annum.

PREVENTION OF VENEREAL DISEASE.

In the editorial notes in the *Medical World* on March 14th last, the following paragraph occurs:—

"I see that the Medical Defence Union held a meeting to discuss the notification and prevention of specific diseases. Resolutions were passed urging resistance to the proposed notification of venereal complaints. There can be no doubt that the profession at large is strongly, and even savagely, opposed to the notification of venereal diseases. Setting aside the Hippocratic oath, such a practice would not only lead to the concealment of disease, but it would create an atmosphere of suspicion between doctor and patient instead of the cordial relations which now for the most part exist. This is a matter upon which the profession should make a determined stand. Nobody can compel anyone else to put his pen to paper, and if it were made quite clear to the Government, by, say, the Medico-Political Union in conjunction with the British Medical Association, together with the Medical Defence Union and the London and Counties Protection Society and other bodies, that under no circumstances would the certification and notification of venereal disease be undertaken, the Government would have to climb down. I also see that the Medical Defence Union recommends the adoption of the very simple and easily carried out measures of prophylaxis which have proved to be effective in the Army and Navy. This, of course, is bound to come. Not all the "Finishing Governesses" in the world can stem that most beneficent rising tide.

NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR HEALTH,
MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

LIQUOR CONTROL.—At its recent meeting the League passed the following resolution:—"That the National League for Health, Maternity, and Child Welfare calls upon the Government to continue some reasonable control of the liquor traffic in the interest of the health and welfare of the mothers and infants of the nation."

MILK SUPPLY.—At its recent meeting, the League passed the following resolution:—"That the National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality calls the attention of the Government to the urgent necessity for reconstruction of the milk supply throughout the country, with regard to (1) its greater purity, (2) freedom from infection, and (3) its seriously diminishing volume. This Association would remind the Government that both the quality and quantity of the milk supply of the United Kingdom are at present in a deplorable state, and that the earliest attention to the problem is vital to the babies and children of to-day, who will bear the burden of Empire in the future."