

merchant sailors. Our information shows that the disease is brought to New Zealand mainly from Australia and Oceania. It is asserted by those acquainted with the men that they are apparently ignorant on the subject, yet probably willing to learn. We advise that merchant seamen be treated in the same way as sailors are in the Royal Navy. To do this it would be necessary that every steamer trading on the routes to the places mentioned, should be compelled to carry the necessary preventive treatment adopted in the Navies. There should be by regulation, pamphlets available referring to the nature of the disease and its prevention, and information should be given as to places for free treatment.

There can be no question that the simple measures adopted in the Navy have had a very marked effect in reducing the amount of syphilitic infection. The Journals of the Royal Army Medical Corps contain several references to the influence of these precautions. It is recognised in the Navy according to the evidence of the Medical Director-General given to the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, November, 1913, that the education of the men by means of lectures is beginning to show good results and the sharp fall in invaliding from venereal disease was to a certain extent attributed to this. It may be mentioned with regard to the Navy that no person suffering from active venereal disease is allowed to land whilst the ship is in any port.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.

It is essential for the purpose of effective treatment that microscopical and bacteriological methods of diagnosis of this disease should be available in the four principal cities of the Dominion. The laboratories must be under the official control and management of a skilled bacteriologist. These establishments would be of immense benefit to the Hospitals, Mental Hospitals, Gaols, and other Public institutions of the Dominion, as well as to the public generally. They are already established in Dunedin, Christchurch, and in Wellington. The value of having such laboratories in the four principal cities would be that practitioners would be able to establish a diagnosis with as little delay as possible. Their practical efficiency de-

pends to a great extent upon the rapidity with which they can supply the necessary information.

The diagnosis of syphilis can in the earlier stages be very readily made long before the organisms have reached the general circulation.

At this stage, that is before the signs in the shape of rashes, etc., are visible to the naked eye, the disease is curable without a prolonged course of treatment. The percentage of cures after proper treatment at this time may be reckoned at nearly 100 per cent., though each succeeding day the chances of cure progressively diminish, until finally after the second year, when, though the outward manifestations may be abolished, the infection is very difficult to eradicate.

The Committee believes that syphilis is beneficially and quickly affected by appropriate treatment. Its disappearance in the community seems to be accelerated by natural and social causes in this Dominion—hence means should be taken as far as possible to prevent the entrance of infected individuals, and to offer them free and efficient treatment by the medical profession. An absolute necessity is Legislation preventing the treatment of syphilitics by unqualified persons. The Wasserman blood test, and the treatment by Salvarsan can only be made use of by medical men. They now permit the medical profession to speak with certainty, where they previously had to rely on impressions. They have shown that the disease is more widespread than was thought previously. It is definitely proved that if adequately used they could nearly always cure the disease in its earliest stages. (Vide British Medical Journal, Nov. 22nd, 1913). Hence the necessity from the public standpoint of placing the public and private treatment of syphilis in the hands only of qualified medical men, for the only treatment available to unqualified persons has never, in the opinion of the most eminent pathologists cured a single case of syphilis.

Dr. Wasserman has stated that the fate of every syphilitic is decided within the first two years following the infection. Neglect of treatment during this period cannot, so far as medical knowledge now goes, be made good afterwards.

Another important point is, that under