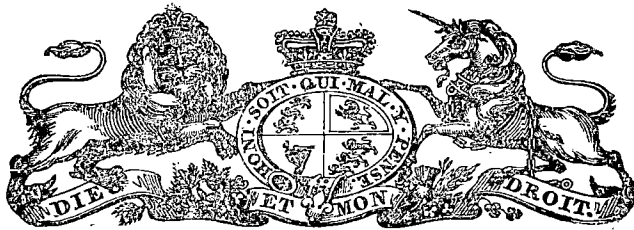


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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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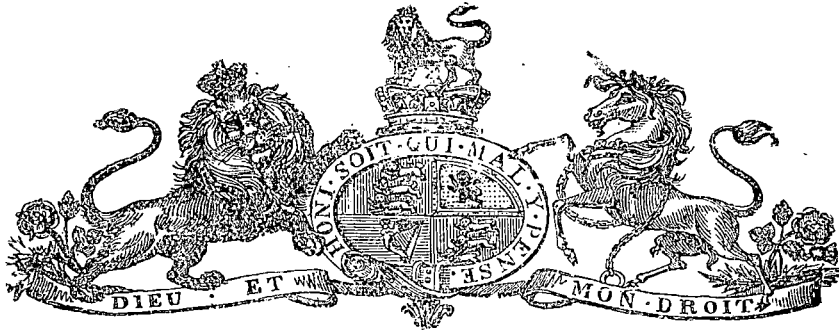
BRITISH CONGRESS ON TUBERCULOSIS,  
LONDON, 1901 :

REPORT BY TASMANIAN DELEGATE (CHARLES  
CROSBY WALCH, Esq., M.B., M.R.C.S.ENG.)

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## BRITISH CONGRESS ON TUBERCULOSIS, LONDON, 1901.

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*London, 2nd September, 1901.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to submit my Report on the British Congress on Tuberculosis.

The Congress was formally opened on the afternoon of 22nd July by the Duke of Cambridge, on behalf of the King, at St. James' Hall: The Duke was supported by a notable assemblage of distinguished persons on the platform, representing many interests and many countries. Your Agent-General was accommodated with one of the front seats on the platform, and your delegate also had a platform seat; and I may here say that throughout the Congress, as your representative, I received the greatest courtesy and attention from the various high officials.

The Duke of Cambridge, having taken the Chair, called upon the Honorary Secretary-General to read his Report, which related how this Congress had originated from the German Congress on Tuberculosis held in Berlin in May, 1889, when representations were made to the British delegates as to the desirability of holding a second Congress in London. Some of these delegates had been appointed by the Prince of Wales to represent the National Association for the Prevention of Consumption, of which His Royal Highness was President. The delegates reported the matter to the Council of the Association, and as one of the objects of the Association is the promotion of Congresses, it was resolved to take the necessary initiatory steps. The Prince of Wales was approached, and he not only gave his approval and consent, but also became President of the Congress. Owing, however, to the death of Queen Victoria, he was unable to open the Congress in person. But by his support, and by the great assistance rendered by the Foreign, Colonial, and Indian Offices, the object of the Congress in bringing together distinguished delegates from all parts of the world was achieved.

The Duke of Cambridge, in rising to declare the Congress open, said that, although he was very much in the background with regard to all the interesting subjects of the Congress that had brought them together, he felt a deep interest in them notwithstanding.

Lord Lansdowne, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, then addressed the meeting, and on behalf of the Government welcomed the foreign and colonial delegates.

He was followed by Lord Cadogan, the Lord Mayor of London, Lord Strathcona, and Lord Lister, the latter of whom pointed out that the Congress met under immeasurably happier auspices than could possibly have been the case a few years ago. "They now knew, thanks to Koch, the enemy they had to deal with in the tubercle bacillus, while Pasteur had shown that the bacillus of tuberculosis was incapable of originating *de novo* in the human body. Hence there was now the splendid prospect of the prevention of tuberculosis."

The foreign delegates were then presented to the Duke of Cambridge by Lord Derby, and, having each briefly addressed the meeting, the proceedings came to a close with a hearty vote of thanks to the Duke of Cambridge, who read a telegram from the King welcoming to his capital the eminent men belonging to almost every nation.

At this meeting I was particularly struck with the enthusiasm shown by the large audience, and by the very hopeful view taken of the struggle with tubercular disease, in that it is now known how to go about the work of preventing and eradicating consumption, although it may be a long time before that goal is actually reached.

The following day I attended an important meeting, of which the principal event was the delivery of a remarkable address by Professor Koch, which has attracted the attention of the whole world. He gave the details of his latest investigations into tuberculosis, which, if confirmed, would clash with many accepted views of the methods of prevention and transmissibility of tuberculosis.

Since the discovery by Koch, 18 years ago, of the tubercle bacillus, it has been held that human and bovine, or cattle tuberculosis, were identical diseases. The diseased parts, both in cattle and men, were shown by Koch himself to contain bacilli identical in every characteristic, and the labours of many other scientists since then had only confirmed the view that they were one and the same disease; consequently, it was held that many cases of human tuberculosis were communicated from tuberculous animals, especially from cattle, through milk and meat supplies. Many stringent measures have been taken by the proper authorities, in the interests of the public, to prevent the contamination of these foods, and, apparently, with very successful results, in reducing the mortality from tuberculosis. But in his address on this occasion, after describing his latest investigations, Koch made the following statement:—"Though the important question whether man is susceptible to bovine tuberculosis at all is not yet absolutely decided, and will not admit of absolute decision to-day or to-morrow, one is, nevertheless, already at liberty to say that, if such a susceptibility really exists, the infection of human beings is but a very rare occurrence. I should estimate the extent of infection by the milk and flesh of tuberculous cattle, and the butter made of their milk, as hardly greater than that of hereditary transmission, and I therefore do not deem it advisable to take any measures against it."

Stated briefly, the grounds upon which we are asked by Koch to discard the well-based convictions that the presence of bacilli in milk and flesh is one of the causes of tuberculosis in man are—

- (1.) The bacilli found in cases of bovine tuberculosis are much more virulent for cattle and other domesticated quadrupeds than the bacilli found in cases of human tuberculosis.
- (2.) This difference is so marked and so constant that it may be relied on as a means of distinguishing the bacilli of bovine tuberculosis from those of the human disease, even assuming that the former may occasionally be found as a cause of the disease in man.
- (3.) If bovine bacilli are capable of causing disease in man, there are abundant opportunities for the transference of the bacilli from the one species to the other, and cases of primary intestinal tuberculosis from the consumption of tuberculous milk ought to be of common occurrence. But *post mortem* examination of human beings proves that cases of primary intestinal tuberculosis are extremely rare in man, and, therefore, it must be concluded that the human subject is immune against infection with bovine bacilli, or is so slightly susceptible that it is not necessary to take any steps to counteract the risk of infection in this way.

Coming, as he has, to these conclusions with regard to the relation between human and bovine tuberculosis, of course, means that he considers that the transmission from man to man, which everybody has recognised as the most common way of contracting consumption, is the only one that need seriously be considered; whereas, all other investigations maintain that, although this is the commonest way, and certainly does deserve the most serious consideration, still, a great number of cases of tuberculosis are contracted from diseased cattle, and that the measures taken to keep our milk and meat supply free from tubercle bacilli should not be relaxed.

Considering that at this Conference there were many other able and highly-qualified men who have devoted much labour and attention to tuberculosis, one would expect that Koch would, at least, have had some support in the results of his investigations. But this is not the case; on the contrary, his propositions have been received with the greatest opposition; and after carefully studying his address, and considering his arguments for, and those against, his views, I think he has been too precipitate in coming to his conclusions, and if no measures are taken to prevent human infection from the milk and flesh of tuberculous animals, it would be a very serious thing; certainly, his word should not be taken as decisive without further investigation.

As regards his statement that the rare occurrence of primary intestinal tuberculosis in man, proves that tuberculous milk cannot be a cause, it is shown that in England, at least, this argument falls to the ground, as in this country primary tubercular disease of the intestine and enlargement of the intestinal lymphatic glands is of quite common occurrence, statistics from the two large children's hospitals in London and Edinburgh showing that in all cases of tuberculosis 29·1 per cent. appeared to have derived primary infection through the intestine; approximately, this would also hold good, I believe, for Australia and Tasmania.

At the general meeting on the following day, Professor M'Fadyean, of the Royal Veterinary College, gave an address on "Tubercle Bacilli in Cows' Milk as a possible source of Tubercular Disease in Man." This turned out to be a direct answer to Professor Koch's statement on the same subject, and it attracted a very large audience. Among other criticisms on Professor Koch's address, he said:—

"It could not be admitted that the low virulence of human bacilli for cattle, proves, or even makes it probable, that bovine bacilli have only a feeble pathogenic power for man. That might have been held to be probable if it had been shown that bovine bacilli were very virulent only for cattle, but since it is well established that these bacilli are highly dangerous for such diverse species as the rabbit, horse, dog, pig, and sheep, and, in short, for almost any quadruped on which they have been tried, it appeared to be highly probable that they are also dangerous to man. At any rate, it was impossible to cite any ascertained fact relating to other bacterial diseases that made the contrary conclusion probable."

Professor M'Faydean also stated that he knew of cases of veterinary surgeons who had accidentally inoculated themselves from diseased cattle, and had apparently contracted tuberculosis as a direct consequence. In connection with this point, I see it stated in the London daily papers that two men have come forward in America and agreed to submit themselves to inoculation with bovine tuberculosis in order to test the truth of Professor Koch's assertion. It will be interesting to follow these experiments, if carried out.

In concluding his address, Professor M'Fadyean expressed his earnest hope that the Congress would not endorse the view that it is inadvisable to take any measures to prevent the transmission of tuberculosis from the lower animals to human beings.

Professor Nocard, of France, endorsed Professor M'Fadyean's views; also Professors Crookshanks and Sims Woodhead.

Although Dr. Koch's heterodox opinions, so boldly expressed, created some warm discussions on this point, everybody was in complete accord with him in the way he laid stress on the extreme danger of human sputum as the main source of infection in man, and this was the text of many discussions in different sections of the Congress, dealing with sanatoria, hospitals, open air treatment, notification, disinfection, and, by no means least, the education of the public as to the infectiousness of tuberculosis, and as to the best way of protecting themselves. Recognising the sputum (containing thousands of contagious germs) as the great source of infection, naturally draws attention to the danger of indiscriminate spitting. It is undoubtedly the case that once this habit disappears, tuberculosis will decrease rapidly.

Professor Brouardel, in an address on the measures adopted by different nations for the prevention of consumption, mentioned that in America the habit of spitting in public places is against the law, and there has been a press campaign against it. He stated the case of a millionaire who, punished for the first offence by a fine, on repeating it was sentenced to 24 hours' imprisonment.

With regard to the notifying of cases of tuberculosis, a few countries have made it compulsory in the same way as other infectious diseases, but the plan that seems to work best is that carried out in Manchester, where the medical practitioners of the City were invited to notify, in order—

1. That the assistant medical officers might visit the homes of cases and instruct the household in the precautionary measures to be adopted, leaving with them printed instructions.
2. That the nature of the measures of disinfection required might be determined.
3. That they should make inquiries into the exposure to infection of individual cases from relations, workmates, friends, etc.; into their occupations and places of work, the various houses which they had inhabited, their physique, personal habits, and so forth.
4. That supervision might be obtained over infected households, change of address ascertained, personal precautions and household cleanliness maintained, and necessary measures of disinfection carried out from time to time.
5. That it might be ascertained if the required measures of disinfection were being executed.
6. That assistance might be given in getting bacteriological examination of sputum in suitable cases.
7. That information regarding households might be obtained to serve as a basis for hospital provision.

The practical working of these regulations has proved very satisfactory. Articles of clothing are disinfected by steam, rooms by washing with soap or solution of chloride of lime, and lime whitening for ceilings. In addition to the work of cleansing and disinfection, a great store of facts has been collected, illustrating the sources of infection and the places which had served as centres of diffusion.

At a meeting of the state and municipal section of the Congress, to which many of the delegates were aldermen and municipal officers of various English and Scottish towns, the following resolution was carried unanimously—

“That the voluntary notification of cases of phthisis attended with tuberculous expectoration and the increased preventive action which it has rendered practicable, have been attended by a promising measure of success, and that the extension of notification should be encouraged in all districts in which efficient sanitary administration renders it practicable to adopt the consequential measures.

Another meeting I attended brought under discussion “Climatology and Sanatoria in the treatment of Consumption.”

Sir Douglas Powell presided, and the discussion was opened by Dr. Theodore Williams and Dr. Burney Yeo reading papers. The opinion generally expressed with regard to climate was, that one that is dry, either marine or inland, and which presents a wide diurnal range of temperature, is the best for consumptives, and in many cases the very high altitudes are not so beneficial as the moderately high ones. Also, it was generally agreed that what the consumptive patient most needs for his cure is a combination of climate and sanatorium treatment. “The patient, if left to his own devices, may make bad use of a good climate, while with skilful guidance in a sanatorium, he may make good use of a bad one. Cure without climate is better than climate without cure.”

In addressing this meeting, I was able to show that we obtained results in Tasmania in the treatment of phthisis which proved the very great merits of the climate, and that, combined with open air sanatorium treatment, it could not be surpassed for consumptives.

At the final general meeting held on 26th July, Lord Derby, in presiding, said they had reached the last stage of their official proceedings at the Congress, and it became their duty to submit certain resolutions which had been arrived at in the sections. He thought the Congress had achieved a success which would render it one to be remembered among the history of similar congresses in the world.

Mr. Malcolm Morris proposed :—

“That tuberculous sputum is the main agent for the conveyance of the virus of tuberculosis from man to man, and that indiscriminate spitting should therefore be suppressed.”

Mr. Harold Swithebank seconded the resolution, which was put and carried.

Professor G. Sims Woodhead proposed :—

“That it is the opinion of this Congress that all public hospitals and dispensaries should present every outpatient suffering from Phthisis with a leaflet containing instructions with regard to the prevention of Consumption, and should supply and insist on the proper use of a pocket spittoon.”

Sir W. Broadbent, in seconding, said that a measure of that kind was of the first necessity to prevent the outpatients' departments becoming centres of infection.

Sir J. Burdon Sanderson proposed :—

“That the provision of Sanatoria is an indispensable part of the measures necessary for the diminution of tuberculosis.”

Sir R. Douglas Powell seconded the motion, which was put and carried.

Sir Herbert Maxwell proposed :—

“That, in the opinion of this Congress and in the light of the work that has been presented at its sittings, medical officers of health should continue to use all the powers at their disposal, and relax no effort to prevent the spread of tuberculosis by milk and meat.”

Lord Spencer seconded the motion, which was carried, and said that he would like to urge on all those who have to act in that matter the advisability of judicious methods of administration, with a certain amount of elasticity, and a great deal of good sense, in their regulations.

Dr. G. Heron moved, and Mr. Lloyd seconded, the following :—

“That, in view of the doubts thrown on the identity of human and bovine tuberculosis, it is expedient that the Government be approached and requested to institute an immediate enquiry into this question, which is of vital importance to the public health and of great consequence to the agricultural industry.”

The motion was put to the meeting, and carried unanimously.

Sir James Crichton Browne moved that—

“The educational work of the great national societies for the prevention of tuberculosis is deserving of every encouragement and support. It is through their agency that a rational public

opinion may be formed, the duties of public health officers made easier of performance, and such local and state legislation as may be requisite called into existence."

Dr. Alfred Hellier seconded the motion, which was put and carried.

Sir William Broadbent moved the following :—

"That this Congress is of opinion that a permanent national committee should be appointed—

"(a) To collect evidence and report on the measures that have been adopted for the prevention of tuberculosis in different countries.

"(b) To publish a popular statement of these measures.

"(c) To keep and publish periodically a record of scientific research in relation to tuberculosis; and

"(d) To consider and recommend measures of prevention.

"This Congress is further of opinion that such a committee should consist of representatives to be elected by the great national societies formed for the suppression of tuberculosis, and, also, representatives nominated by various Governments. It is further of opinion that all international committees and great national societies whose object is the prevention of tuberculosis should be invited to co-operate."

Professor Brouardel seconded the motion, which was put and carried.

Professor Crookshanks proposed—

"That, in the opinion of this Congress, overcrowding, defective ventilation, damp, and general insanitary conditions in the houses of the working-classes diminish the chance of curing consumption and aid in predisposing and in spreading the disease."

Dr. C. Theodore Williams seconded the motion, which was put and carried.

The Chairman having congratulated the members of the Congress on the successful termination of their labours, the proceedings came to a close.

It is hoped that the third International Congress will meet in Paris in three years' time.

As the prevention of tuberculosis is of vast importance to all people, I would recommend you to secure for your medical advisers the publications and reports issued from time to time by the permanent national committee.

I have made a special point of enquiring into the modern methods of treating tuberculosis in sanatoria, and, being particularly impressed with the importance of this subject, it is my intention to proceed to Germany, the headquarters of this treatment, and study its practical working in detail.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

CHAS. CROSBY WALCH, M.B., M.R.C.S.

*The Honourable the Premier of Tasmania.*