

in making such contributions would be laying the foundations of future literary and scientific reputation

---

*Report of the Tuberculosis Committee.*

The Derby meeting of the Association did not pass without reference to the unfortunate report of the Tuberculosis Committee. The President explained that the whole matter had been considered by the Council, that they had obtained the opinion of an expert of the highest eminence, and that it was desirable to proceed further in order to have the statistics corrected and published in this JOURNAL. As we have previously indicated, the errors in these statistics do not vitiate the important conclusions set forth by the Committee. Of that the Council has been definitely assured; and, as Dr. Yellowlees remarked, it is the duty of the Council to protect the honour and dignity of the Association. The whole of the materials accumulated and dealt with by the Tuberculosis Committee in the production of their Report will be submitted to a searching expert inquiry, and the results will be made known. Nothing less could be regarded as satisfactory in the circumstances; the members of the Committee are just as desirous of having mistakes corrected as the Council or the Association at large. The Chairman of the Committee has taken a course which is absolutely unassailable; having consulted with the members of his Committee, he laid the matter before the Council and gave every possible assistance towards the amendment of the errors into which the Committee fell. We may therefore await with confidence the result of these deliberations.

The resolution proposed at the meeting, if successful, would have had the effect of a finding of no confidence in the Council, and it was consequently very properly, promptly, and decisively rejected.

---

*The Colney Hatch Fire.*

The suffocation of fifty insane persons, as the result of a fire in an English asylum, constitutes a tragedy that might

have been hoped to be impossible. Yet, despite the magnitude of the loss of life, there is much reason to be thankful that it was not greater.

The Commissioners in Lunacy for many years past have exerted themselves strenuously and with unceasing vigilance to render all buildings receiving the insane as nearly fireproof as possible. They have most rigorously insisted on structural means of escape, and on most elaborate provisions of all means and appliances for the extinction of fire. The result of this long-continued care is that asylums are probably better protected against fire than any other public institutions.

The inflammable character of the buildings in which the disaster occurred is therefore in direct antagonism to the principles of construction which the Commissioners have habitually demanded.

The explanation of this exception is not far to seek. At the time of the construction of these buildings the London County Council were greatly pressed for accommodation for their patients, and in their efforts to provide it there is every probability that the principles of the Lunacy Commission were overridden. This, however, could not have been accomplished without the aid of the Home Secretary of that period.

The finding of the jury blamed the disastrous construction equally on the London County Council, the Home Secretary, and the Lunacy Commission.

The above considerations, however, lead to the conviction that the latter body is not culpable, and that the blame really attaches to the Home Secretary and the London County Council. This latter body has done such good service in the care of the insane that their share of the blame should speedily be forgotten, especially in face of the strenuous efforts that are being made to render the recurrence of such a calamity impossible.

The silver lining of this dark cloud is furnished by the splendid behaviour of the asylum staff, from highest to lowest. The searching inquiry of the jury failed to elicit the smallest failure on the part of the staff, but proved, on the contrary, that all concerned had, with self-sacrificing courage and devotion, efficiently performed their duty.

---