BRITISH FEDERATION AGAINST THE VENEREAL DISEASES*

BY

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The British Social Hygiene Council was the central agency for propaganda against the venereal diseases until 1942. In that year certain of its functions were taken over by the Central Council for Health Education under the direction of the Ministry of Health. A number of individuals representing various non-governmental organizations felt that there were certain ways and means outside the scope of the C.C.H.E.'s terms of reference by which venereal diseases could be actively combated.

In April, 1951, a meeting under the chairmanship of Sir Allen Daley was held at B.M.A. House; it was agreed that a new organization should be formed, with the following aims and objects:

- (1) To study conditions that favour venereal infections and methods of combating them.
- (2) To assist bodies whose activities are anti-venereal in effect.
- (3) To encourage the spread of knowledge of the facts about venereal diseases.
- (4) To collaborate with other national and international organizations having similar objectives.

A committee representing various bodies was elected to consider in detail the problems of forming such an organization and Dr. F. R. Curtis was elected honorary secretary. A generous donation from Col. L. W. Harrison and a further donation from the M.S.S.V.D. gave the organization initial financial support. It was further agreed that the new body should be represented at a meeting of the Union Internationale contre le Peril Vénérien (U.I.P.V.) in May, 1951. At a later meeting of the committee it was agreed to call the organization "The British Federation against the Venereal Diseases". As the result of the efforts of the hon. secretary, the bodies listed below and several individual members agreed to support or subscribe to the B.F.V.D.

Association for Moral and Social Hygiene
Apostleship of the Sea

British Medical Association
British Social Biology Council
Central Council for Health Education
Church of England Moral Welfare Council
Institute of Almoners
Invalid Children's Aid Association
Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases
Missions to Seamen
National Association for Maternal and Child Welfare
National Association of Probation Officers
National Council of Women
Royal College of Nursing
Scottish Council for Health Education

At the first Annual General Meeting held in May, 1952, it was unanimously resolved that an individual member, Dr. J. A. Scott, County Medical Officer to the London County Council, should be elected chairman of the Federation. It was resolved that the annual subscription for member associations should be two guineas and for individual members one guinea. It was also agreed that the B.F.V.D. should subscribe to the U.I.P.V. A committee with executive powers and the right to co-opt members was elected.

At a meeting of this committee in October, 1952, it was decided to appoint Dr. A. J. Dalzell-Ward of the C.C.H.E. and Dr. C. S. Nicol as joint hon. secretaries to replace Dr. F. R. Curtis, who had resigned. The C.C.H.E. generously offered office facilities for the secretarial work. The committee held a further six meetings before the Annual General Meeting in October, 1953, and the outcome of these meetings is summarized below:

(A) *Social Workers in Clinics*.—The committee had at hand an analysis of the number of clinics lacking the help of social workers or health visitors compiled by the Venereologists Group of the British Medical Association as the result of a questionnaire. It was thought that Medical Officers in charge of clinics who felt in need of such help should be supported, and after correspondence with the B.M.A. it was agreed this recommendation should be submitted through the Venereologists Group Committee. It was later learned from the B.M.A. that ten Medical Officers in charge of clinics had requested help in this matter.

(B) *Contact Tracing*.—It was felt that the use of contact tracing methods in clinics should be encouraged,

* Received for publication May 23, 1954.

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particularly in relation to the exchange of information between clinics. A form of contact slip was evolved which could be bound in book form with a counterfoil to facilitate "follow up" by the Medical Officer or social worker. The hospital of origin would complete the front of the form indicating the patient's number and diagnosis (employing the Ministry of Health code) while the hospital or clinic where the contact attended (if different from the hospital of origin) would complete the reverse side of the slip and return it. After a number of modifications had been agreed, this contact slip was approved by the Ministry of Health and by the M.S.S.V.D.:

<p>[Front]</p> <p>Date</p> <p>Ref. No.</p> <p>Diagnosis</p> <p>Result</p>	<p>Form.....</p> <p><u>Please make sure you bring this form with you when you attend</u></p> <p>Hospital of Origin (Space for hospital stamp with times of clinic if desired)</p> <p>Ref. No. Diagnosis</p> <p>Date (M. of H. code)</p>
<p>[Reverse]</p>	<p><u>Please return to issuing hospital</u></p> <p>Hospital..... Ref. No.</p> <p>Diagnosis.....</p> <p>Date..... (M. of H. code)</p>

Information concerning this contact slip has already been sent to Regional Administration Officers and a specimen copy will also be sent to members of the M.S.S.V.D. Bound books of this contact slip (50 per book) are being printed and will be available from Messrs. Shaw and Sons, 7, 8, and 9 Fetter Lane, London, E.C.4.

(C) *Prostitution*.—Mr. E. Kelsey, a legal adviser to the L.C.C. who had been co-opted to the committee, submitted a memorandum "The Law as to Venereal Disease, Prostitution, and Kindred Offences". In the part of his document dealing with the legal aspect of brothels he pointed out the difficulties of taking legal action when it is known that a particular house is a source of multiple infections.

After correspondence with the Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police it was learned that it was not at present possible for a police representative to discuss the problems of prostitution.

A report on the existing statutory enactments and regulations dealing with soliciting was submitted by Miss Chave Collisson of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene.

The committee was also informed by Mrs. E. French of the British Social Biology Council of an important publication on prostitution which was pending, and she talked on this subject when she represented the Federation at a meeting of the U.I.P.V.

It was felt that further information on the problems of prostitution might be obtained in some city other than London, and the city of Cardiff was suggested.

(D) *U.I.P.V.*.—The U.I.P.V., under the chairmanship of Dr. Hermans, was attempting to raise money to set up an office in Rotterdam (possibly at the Rotterdam Port Demonstration Centre), or in Geneva in close

proximity to the World Health Organization. It was agreed that the B.F.V.D. would attempt to help in this matter and that letters should be sent to nine drug firms and a personal approach made to the Shipping Federation. No offers of financial support were however forthcoming. The Shipping Federation replied that they were already represented internationally on the joint committee of W.H.O. and the International Labour Office formed in 1949 with offices in Geneva. In April, 1953, Mr. A. J. King, Col. L. W. Harrison, and Mrs. French represented the B.F.V.D. at a meeting of the U.I.P.V. held in Rotterdam.

(E) *Seamen*.—A report on problems of V.D. as they affected seamen was submitted by the Rev. More O'Ferrall of the Apostleship of the Sea.

All these matters were reported at the second Annual General Meeting in October, 1953. Observers representing the Admiralty and the War Office were present. Various changes in the constitution of the Federation were agreed and the Executive Committee was reconstituted to ensure that each Member Branch was represented.

After a report from Mr. King and Col. Harrison (the Federation's representatives to the U.I.P.V.), it was agreed that the present functioning of the Union was not entirely satisfactory and should be kept under review. The Federation decided to subscribe to the U.I.P.V. for a further year. Future policy was discussed.

The newly-constituted Executive Committee has met three times since the Annual General Meeting and the following is a summary of work at present in hand :

(a) Action is being taken to form a liaison with the Commonwealth and British Colonies in the campaign against V.D., in particular to seek co-operation with official and voluntary organizations including the appropriate directors of Medical Services, giving information about the B.F.V.D. and offering all possible assistance.

(b) Action is being taken to give more publicity to the official Ministry of Health quarterly figures of venereal diseases (as one result of these efforts these returns are now published in the Epidemiology Section of the *British Medical Journal*).

(c) *Various Methods of Anti-V.D. Propaganda under Consideration.*—The C.C.H.E. have offered their co-operation in this matter. The possibilities of :

- (i) Radio programmes ;
- (ii) Film strips in conjunction with group discussions ;
- (iii) An article in *Health Information Digest* ;
- (iv) An article in *Family Doctor* ;

are under investigation. This would be supplementary to the propaganda programme of the Ministry of Health.

(d) After considering a memorandum submitted by Mr. A. J. King and Dr. C. S. Nicol on "Non-Specific Urethritis" and receiving further information from Dr. G. L. M. McElligott, it has been agreed that details of this condition should be made more widely known among doctors, nurses, and social workers. Through the good offices of Dr. Scott the Metropolitan Branch of the

Medical Officers of Health invited the M.S.S.V.D. to discuss the subject of non-specific urethritis and a meeting was held on March 12, 1954. The proceedings of this meeting are to be published.

The generous gift of a legacy of £100 was left to the Federation in the will of the late Miss Bertha Walkden.

The present constitution of the Executive Committee is as follows :

Chairman : Dr. J. A. Scott
Association for Moral and Social Hygiene : Miss M. Chave Collisson
Apostleship of the Sea : Rev. R. More O'Ferrall
British Medical Association : Col. L. W. Harrison (*Hon. Treasurer*)
British Social Biology Council : Mrs. E. French
Central Council for Health Education : Dr. A. J. Dalzell-Ward (*Hon. Secretary*)
Church of England Moral Welfare Council : Miss E. M. Steel
Institute of Almoners : Miss S. McFerran
Invalid Children's Aid Association : Dr. Letitia Fairfield
Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases : Mr. A. J. King (*Voting Representative*) ; Dr. C. S. Nicol (*Hon. Secretary*) ; Dr. G. L. M. McElligott
Missions to Seamen : Cmdr. H. Selby Ash
National Association for Maternal and Child Welfare : Miss I. V. Evelyn
National Association of Probation Officers : Mr. F. Dawtry (*Vice-Chairman*)
National Council of Women : Mrs. M. F. Bligh
Royal College of Nursing : Miss B. Tarratt
Scottish Council for Health Education : Mr. McMorreson
Co-opted Members : Dr. Mary Michael-Shaw, Miss E. M. Gosling
Hon. Solicitor : Mr. E. K. Kelsey
Hon. Accountants : Singleton and Fabian and Co.

It is hoped that in future an annual report of the activities of the B.F.V.D. will appear in this *Journal* by courtesy of the Editor.