was politically uncongenial, and because I wish to be free to advance in public any opinions that seem to me likely to be of service in the present crisis in the history of the College.

I greatly regret having to sever my connexion with the Council, amongst whom are many of my oldest and most intimate friends. My consolation is that some of them, I have reason to know, hold opinions very similar to my own.

THE TUBERCULOSIS PREVENTION (IRELAND) BILL.

WE are informed that the action of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland in reference to the Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Bill as published in THE LANCET of Oct. 31st, and especially the sending of a document by the president and secretary containing a resolution passed at a conference of delegates held in Dublin, is not approved by a large body of the medical profession in Ireland and that as a result the following memorial has been sent to the members of the Grand Committee who are at present discussing the Bill :—

We, the undersigned, being deeply interested in the Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Bill, and having carefully studied the question, beg respectfully to submit the following statement for your consideration :—

1. The rapid spread of tuberculosis in Ireland seriously imperils the vitality of our race at home and abroad.
2. Some special means therefore must be speedily adopted for preventing the ravages of consumption.
3. Whatever is to be done must be done at once.
4. The disease spreads by infection.
5. In order to deal with the disease effectively the location of the cases must be known to the sanitary authorities.
6. This knowledge can only be obtainable by notification.
7. The notification to be effective must be compulsory. If optional, experience has shown that it will not be carried out.
8. It is only proposed to notify such cases as are a source of danger to the public health; the selection of the class of cases to be determined by the Local Government Board with the advice of a committee of medical men.
9. Notification as proposed in the Bill is protective, not penal.
10. For seven years compulsory notification has been carried out in the city of New York with the greatest benefit to the public health, and with none of the drawbacks put forward by the opponents of the Bill. So successful has it proved that the system of compulsory notification has been recently extended to the entire State of New York.
11. The great Congress of Tuberculosis held in Washington a few weeks ago, and representative of all nations, unanimously recommended the adoption of compulsory notification by all Governments.
12. We leave the other provisions of the Bill untouched as they are of a non-contentious character.

ANDREW J. HORNE,
President, Royal College of Physicians in Ireland.
JOHN LENTAIGNE,
President, Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland.
WILLIAM J. SMYLY, Knt., M.D., F.R.C.P.I.,
President, Irish Medical Association.
JOHN MCCALL, M.D.,
President of the Ulster Medical Society.
J. WALLACE BOYCE, M.D.,
President, Leinster Branch, British Medical Association.
ALEXANDER DEMPSEY, M.D.,
President, Ulster Branch, British Medical Association.
JOHN W. BYERS, Knt., M.A., M.D., M.A.O.,
President, Belfast Branch, Irish Medical Association.
WILLIAM J. THOMPSON, Knt., M.D., F.R.C.P.I.
ALFRED E. BOYD, M.B., D.P.H.
WILLIAM CALWELL, M.A., M.D.
MICHAEL F. COX, M.D., F.R.C.P.I.
JAMES A. LINDSAY, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. Lond.,
Professor of Medicine, Queen's College, Belfast.
E. J. M'WEENEY, M.A., M.D., D.P.H.,
Professor of Bacteriology, C.U. Medical School, Dublin.
THOMAS SINCLAIR, M.D., F.R.C.S. Eng.,
Professor of Surgery, Queen's College, Belfast.

A CORRESPONDENT writes :—"In considering any Bill closely affecting the medical profession two courses may be taken by its members. First, they may decide to support it and to try their best to get carried any amendments which they believe necessary; or secondly, they may oppose it. The members of the conference which met in Dublin, under the auspices of the Academy of Medicine, took neither course, but they finally, at their second meeting (at which 11 delegates were present—at their first meeting there were only six), passed a resolution approving of compulsory notification of tuberculosis, 'subject, however, to the incorporation therein' of certain provisions. In the opinion of many this constituted an indirect but equally efficacious method of killing the Bill, as it is far from likely that the Government will accept their provisions. The first provision—that is, the compulsory appointment by county councils of medical officers of health—has no necessary connexion with the Bill; it may be a proper thing

to be done, but such a change in public health matters is more appropriate for the coming Bill to reorganise the Poor-law service. The second point, about disinfecting houses, is already provided for in other Acts which the Local Government Board will make applicable to this Bill when it passes. The third provision, compelling county councils to provide hospitals for the segregation of advanced cases of tuberculosis, is unnecessary. The sanitary authorities have at present power to take the very poor who have not proper home accommodation to the workhouse, and such a power, if necessary, could be used and some wards in the workhouse hospitals set apart for such cases, as has already been done in some of the unions. Again, some of the boards of guardians have voluntarily erected sanatoriums. The Abbey Sanatorium, near Belfast has 265 beds for early and advanced cases and the South Dublin union has made provision for patients. What sensible people in Ireland feel is that when once it is brought home to the various sanitary authorities how many cases of consumption in their district require attention they will face the question, not through the compulsion of an Act of Parliament but by the pressure of public opinion. The fourth provision, demanding that the Imperial Exchequer should make a grant to cover at least half the expenses incurred by local bodies in working the Act, is rather a question for Members of Parliament than for the medical profession. Now it will be seen that not a single one of the above provisions, the actual adoption of which this conference in Dublin made contingent on their support of the Bill, is really essential, and those representative medical men who have signed the memorial in opposition to the Academy of Medicine regard them as non-contentious. From a purely medical point of view the Government, when approached by members of the Irish medical profession, agreed to make two important changes. First, they decided that the cases to be notified were those of open tuberculosis; and secondly, they have promised to appoint a representative body of physicians and surgeons who will be consulted by the Local Government Board in the carrying out of the working of the Act. No Government can be expected to yield to any body who say we will support your Bill but provided only that you adopt certain provisions on which we insist, and especially so when in carrying through a Bill the public as well as the medical profession have to be considered. It is right to add that the committee of the Royal Academy of Medicine on Oct. 27th adopted the following motion :—

That the committee of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Ireland, being the executive of the Conference of Medical Bodies, and having been informed that the letter dated Oct. 2nd and signed by the President and secretary of the Academy is being used to wreck the Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Bill, desire to point out that there is nothing in the words of the circular to justify such action. The sole object of the Conference was to improve and not to imperil the Bill."

HOUSE DRAINAGE.

Mr. John Burns has appointed Dr. Ludovic William Darra Mair, Mr. Allan Arthur Grenville Malet, M. Inst. C.E., and Mr. Harry John Pearson, A.R.I.B.A., to be a committee to inquire and to report with regard to the use of intercepting traps in house drains. Dr. Mair is appointed chairman and Mr. Edward Hardwick Terry secretary of the committee.

The secretary of the committee has forwarded to us the following letter which has been sent to the town clerks of the principal towns of England and Wales, with a request for its insertion :—

SIR,—The President of the Local Government Board has appointed a Departmental Committee to inquire and report with regard to the use of intercepting traps in house drains, and I am directed by this committee to inform you that they will shortly be prepared to receive evidence on the subject from medical officers of health, engineers, architects, and others having special knowledge of it.

With a view to assisting the committee to select witnesses for this purpose I am instructed by the committee to inquire whether the officers of your town council would be prepared to give evidence should the committee so desire, and, if so, to request that you will be good enough to forward to me at your earliest convenience, and not later than the 21st prox., a précis of the evidence they would propose to tender.

I am to add that the committee are of opinion, at present, that their terms of reference will involve consideration of the need or otherwise of the intercepting trap; of any disadvantages of the trap; of the effect on the community of emanations from sewers or drains; to some

extent also of the ventilation of sewers and drains; and of the bearing of existing conditions on the question.

I inclose for your information a copy of the terms of reference to the committee.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
(Sd.) E. HARDWICK TERRY,
Secretary to the Committee.
To the Town Clerk.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

THE Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England has issued its annual report of the work of the College in its various departments during the period from August 1st, 1907, to August 1st, 1908. The report will be laid before the annual meeting of Fellows and Members which is to be held in the theatre of the College on Nov. 19th. The President will take the chair at 3 P.M.

With reference to the resolution passed at the last annual meeting asking the Council to use its moral influence with hospital authorities to recognise Members of the College as having equal rights with provincial, Scotch, and Irish graduates to become candidates for hospital appointments, the Council circulated a memorandum on the subject to the boards of management of the several hospitals in England and Wales. After calling attention to a regulation in force at some hospitals, under which the ordinary pass degree of any British university is accepted as qualifying for appointments on the staff, whereas the diplomas of M.R.C.S. Eng. and L.R.C.P. Lond. are not so accepted, the Council in its memorandum pointed out the injustice of this regulation to diplomates of the two Royal Colleges and trusted that the authorities of hospitals who made this distinction between diplomates and graduates would see their way to modify a regulation which affected unjustly many who have studied and qualified in London.

In regard to a further resolution asking the Council to report as to its willingness to join the College and its work with the University of London, and whether it would approach the Royal College of Physicians for a similar conjoint action, the Council appointed a committee to combine with any committee which might be appointed by the Royal College of Physicians with a similar object for the purpose of considering and drafting a scheme which, if approved by the Colleges, should be submitted to the Senate of the University of London, with the object of establishing a system of conjoint examinations for the degrees of M.B. and B.S. and the diplomas of L.R.C.P. Lond. and M.R.C.S. Eng. The Council reports that this question will in due course come under the joint consideration of the two Colleges, as at a recent meeting of the Royal College of Physicians a resolution was adopted expressing the opinion that "it is desirable that the University of London be approached by the two Colleges with the object of establishing a system of conjoint examinations in accordance with the principle of Statute 123 of the University."

The question of admitting women to the diplomas of the College is dealt with in the report and the returns of the result of the poll recently taken by the Council on the question are published in full.

The proposed extension of the interval between the second and final examination of the Conjoint Board from two to two and a half years suggested by the midwifery curriculum committee of the Royal College of Physicians has been under the consideration of the committee of management at the Conjoint Board and various meetings have been held to consider the question. The committee had authority to enter into negotiations with the other examining bodies to attain this end. When considering the question the committee had before it an important report of the education committee of the General Medical Council presented to that Council in May last, dealing with the division of the subjects of the curriculum into groups, and the interval to be desired between the examinations in the group of subjects.

Statistics contained in this report of the sub-committee showed that the figures for England were dominated by those of the Conjoint Board, and under the regulations of that board there were provisions which guaranteed for the subjects of the final examination an uninterrupted period of study of two years from the date of the completion of the intermediate examination. In the case of the Scottish

universities there was no such requirement. The education committee was of opinion that the question could not be satisfactorily settled until the General Medical Council was in possession of the actual details relating to the time spent under each licensing body in preparation for each of the consecutive examinations of the course. The secretary of the Conjoint Board, with the assistance of his staff, has given the information asked for in full detail, and it is understood that at the next session of the General Medical Council a further report will be issued giving information on the subject of the periods spent in passing the examinations in the several groups of subjects at the various examining bodies. The committee of management is consequently of opinion that it will be desirable to postpone any communication with other bodies in reference to the interval between the second and final examinations until such further report is in its hands. This will probably be in December next.

Some slight additions have been made to the syllabus of the examination in physics which will come into force in April, 1909. In response to an invitation to depute a representative of the College to give evidence before the Home Office committee on the London ambulance service the Council nominated the President for that purpose, who submitted evidence before the committee in December last and furnished information with reference to the ambulance systems of Paris, Berlin, and Boston.

At a meeting held at the Royal College of Physicians to consider the proposals for a territorial medical service, and attended by the Secretary of State for War, the Director-General of the Army Medical Service, and numerous members of the medical profession, it was decided to form a small committee to consider and to inform the Director-General how the proposals for a territorial medical service could best be carried into effect. The Presidents of the Colleges gave their assistance when desired by the Director-General at meetings and by correspondence with the War Office.

Asked for advice by the city council for organisation of charity upon certain questions concerning the treatment of patients for hernia, the Council replied that the operation for the radical cure of hernia has been much improved in recent years, is more often done than formerly, and gives a very large percentage of successes in suitable cases. The majority of patients with hernia should therefore have the treatment by operation offered to them. The Council further expressed the opinion that patients with hernia should not simply go to an institution to be provided with a truss, but should receive an opinion in the first instance from a competent surgeon as to whether or not an operation was desirable.

The examination hall buildings which were erected by the two Colleges during the years 1885-90 at a cost of £60,000 have been sold recently to the Institution of Civil Engineers for the sum of £50,000, as owing to the increase of laboratory accommodation at the hospitals in London it has been felt that the buildings are too large for the present requirements of the Colleges.

The number of diplomas issued during the year is: Membership, 365; Fellowship, 50; Licence in Dental Surgery, 86; and the Diploma in Public Health, 24. These figures compare favourably with those of the previous year except that the number of Membership diplomas is 70 less. The year has been one of steady progress for the College museum. In the autumn of last year the library was repainted. A new catalogue cabinet has been added to the two already in use, an addition of some 40,000 entries thus becoming possible. The large library is now fully catalogued on the index principle. The closing of the library last autumn for two months for painting accounts for the somewhat small number of readers—10,244—as compared with the previous year, when the number was 11,090.

ASYLUM REPORTS.

Hertfordshire County Asylum (Annual Report for the Year ending March 31st, 1908).—The admissions to this asylum numbered 141; of these 23 were transfers. The recoveries numbered 49, giving a recovery-rate of 41.5 per cent. calculated on the admissions in 1907. The deaths numbered 37, giving a percentage of 6.22 on the average number resident. We notice in this report that the Commissioners in Lunacy on the day of their visit found the general health of