

BIRTH RATE SLUMP

250,000 "Loss"

DOCTOR'S FEARS

Medical Congress

ADELAIDE, Tuesday. — Speaking at the first plenary session of the Australasian Medical Congress in the University of Adelaide to-day, Professor Harvey Sutton, of New South Wales, said if the birth rate of 1921 had been maintained there would now have been 250,000 more people in Australia.

The calamity of losing 63,000 lives in the Great War was well known, but the "loss" of the lives of 250,000 since the war because of the fall in the birth rate was not recognised. The decline was not a question of money, as statistics showed that richer people had fewer children.

Professor Sutton said that the two most important steps for social progress were the resuscitation of family life and the reconstruction of the home on one hand, and the development of mental hygiene on the other. Since the war there had been a veritable landslide in births, and if the present trend persisted the population would cease to increase about 1945. Unless present conditions changed there would be insufficient mothers and children in the next generation, and our numbers must decrease. It was becoming hereditary not to have children, and the solution was to discover the family and the home.

Dr. Dale (Melbourne City Health Officer) said that the insecurity of modern life was a reason why people did not have children.

Dr. F. Scholes, of Melbourne, said that too much money was spent on amusement, and people could not afford to be born in the home or even die there.

The chairman of the neurology and psychiatry section (Dr. John K. Adey, of Victoria) said that the medical profession shut its eyes to the fact that many unqualified practitioners got a certain number of results. If some methods of charlatanry had curative value they should be subjected to proper scientific investigation.

Dr. Adey said that the out-patient department of every large hospital was haunted by patients who were ill because they were unhappy.

Combating Tuberculosis

Sir Henry Newland said that tuberculosis was the "captain of the Men of Death," although the mortality rate from the disease had been halved in Great Britain in the last 30 years.

On the motion of Dr. J. Newman Morris, of Melbourne, the following resolutions

On the motion of Dr. J. Newman Morris, of Melbourne, the following resolutions were passed:—

"That as the economic factor is of the utmost importance in the control of tuberculosis, and in order that the resistance of contacts may be improved and maintained, a system of allowances should be introduced by Governments which will enable the nutrition of families of tuberculosis patients to be adequately provided for."

"That in view of the spread of tuberculosis through infected milk and to safeguard the community from tuberculosis and also from infection from other diseases through the milk supply, all milk used for human consumption should be pasteurised."

The eradication of tuberculosis in Australia was a practical ideal, said several delegates. There had been a welcome decline in the mortality rate from the disease in the last few years, but in view of the excellence of its climate and its relatively high standard of living, Australia could not view its annual death rate of nearly 3,000 from tuberculosis with equanimity.

Meetings of all sectional groups will be continued to-morrow.