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WAR CABINET.THE TRANSFER OF POWERS TO A MINISTRY OF HEALTHMemorandum by the Minister of Reconstruction.

1. The Bill as it stands provides for the transfer to the Ministry of Health on its establishment of:-

- (a) all the powers and duties of the Local Government Board;
- (b) all the powers and duties of the English and Welsh Insurance Commissions;
- (c) the powers of the Board of Education for safeguarding the health of expectant and nursing mothers, and of children under five who are not attending schools recognised by the Board;
- (d) the powers of the Privy Council in relation to midwives.

The following paragraphs summarise the Health functions other than those thus specified in the Bill which appear to be proper to be exercised by a Ministry of Health.

The question of the precise extent to which, and the date at which, these functions should be transferred, is one which would require to be determined after a detailed examination by the Departments concerned, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health, as the Ministry gets into working order and experience ripens.

Functions proper for Transfer.a). Board of Education.

Powers and duties in relation to health work for children and young persons, other than those transferred to the Local Government Board by agreement between Lord Rhondda and Mr. Fisher, or included in the Ministry of Health Bill for immediate transfer to the Ministry. Mr. Fisher made the following statement as regards the ultimate transfer of these services in debate on the Committee stage of the Education Bill (Official Report, 1st July, 1918, Col. 1465):

"I do regard this as an ad interim arrangement. We as a Board have had experience of the admirable results of the system of compulsory school inspection which has been the result of the establishment of a school medical service. All we are proposing to do in this Clause is to extend these admirable results which have been obtained within the sphere of elementary education to the continued education which is being provided for in this Bill. Assuming that a Ministry of Health is established

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hereafter, I think that that Ministry will in due course of time take over or supervise the medical functions now entrusted to the school medical service."

5(b). Board of Control.

Powers and duties in relation to the treatment of lunacy and mental deficiency under the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913.

6(c). Ministry of Pensions.

Powers and duties in relation to the care of disabled soldiers, officers, and non, including provision for their health and training, under the Naval and Military War Pensions, etc., Act, 1915, and the Ministry of Pensions Act, 1916.

7(d). Privy Council.

Powers and duties in relation to the control, through the General Medical Council and the Pharmaceutical Society, of the professional conduct of doctors and dentists, and of pharmacists, respectively; control of the sale of poisons.

8(e). Registrar-General.

Powers and duties in relation to the registration of births, marriages, and deaths.

9(f). Home Office.

Powers and duties in relation to infant life protection under the Children Act, 1908.

10(g). Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Powers and duties in relation to the inspection of milk and food.

11(h). Patent Medicines.

It is assumed that effect will be given, as a result of the establishment of a Ministry of Health, to the following recommendation of the Select Committee of 1914 on this subject:

- (1) That the administration of the law governing the advertisement and sale of patent, secret, and proprietary medicines and appliances be co-ordinated and combined under the authority of one Department of State.
- (2) That this administration be part of the functions of the Ministry of Public Health when such a Department is created, and that in the meanwhile it be undertaken by the Local Government Board.

12. It is assumed that it is not desirable, so far as can at present be foreseen, to transfer from their present control the health services administered by various Departments, such as the Admiralty, Air Council, War Office, Colonial Office, India Office, General Post Office, and Board of Trade, as a subsidiary part of the main functions entrusted to the Department.

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13. But it would be a most important function of the Ministry of Health, and a function that can only be exercised effectively by such a Ministry, to arrange for frequent consultation and co-operation in health questions between its officers, professional and administrative, and the officers of such Departments as those enumerated in the preceding paragraph, and of the Departments responsible for the inspection of mines and factories, and for welfare work in industry. The object of the Ministry of Health would be to ensure that the general standard of health administration in the public service should not fall below the highest level from time to time attainable.

C. ADDISON.

10th July, 1918.