**ANNOTATIONS**

*Astigmatism.* Simple myopic astigmatism exceeding three dioptres in the better eye should be a cause of rejection of candidates both for scholarships and for training as teachers. In cases of compound myopic astigmatism, unless the myopia is stationary, astigmatism of even two dioptres may be a cause of rejection.

Cases of hypermetropic astigmatism should be rejected only if visual acuity, with correcting glasses, in the better eye is less than 6/9.

*Hypermetropia.* This defect should not be a cause of rejection unless vision, with correcting glasses, in the better eye is less than 6/9.

*Special cases.* If there is only one eye, or if there is only one useful eye, the other being amblyopic from non-progressive disease, which in no way affects, nor is likely to affect the good eye, the case should be judged on the condition of the good eye.

In the case of candidates for university and technical senior scholarships, or those intending to specialise as teachers of certain technical subjects, greater latitude may be allowed after consideration of special circumstances as to nature of work, condition of the candidate's eyes in other respects, etc.

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**ANNOTATIONS**

National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, Incorporated, New York City

Through the courtesy of the secretary we have received a bundle of the publications of this society, which was founded in 1915, for the purpose of meeting a need felt by workers in the field of prevention of blindness for some central agency to furnish information and to assist in forwarding this most important work. Among its supporters are physicians and laymen, men and women, interested in public welfare. "Half of all blindness is preventable; hence there is a field of activity for this committee in helping to create by agitation and education a condition of watchfulness and care that this great calamity to individuals and to Society shall not fall upon them needlessly."

The objects of this committee are as follow:

1. To endeavour to ascertain, through study and investigation, any causes, whether direct or indirect, which may result in blindness or impaired vision.
2. To advocate measures which shall lead to the elimination of such causes.
3. To disseminate knowledge concerning all matters pertaining to the care and use of the eyes.

The following programme has been arranged: "The preparation of circulars and literature for general distribution and furnishing these at nominal cost to workers for the conservation of vision; making available the latest authentic information relative to this special subject; collecting and rendering available for general use a library of literature, photographs, lantern slides, exhibits, etc.; rendering assistance and expert advice in the formation of similar societies; co-operation with educational and medical authorities (a) in the establishment and improvement of service relating to eye conditions, (b) in the establishment of sight saving classes for children of such limited vision that they cannot profitably use the books and other educational equipment provided for normally-sighted children; co-operation with safety and illuminating engineers to prevent eye accidents in the industries through the installation and use of safety devices and of adequate lighting systems; promoting legislation for improving the means of preventing blindness and impaired vision; publishing from time to time news of the movement for the encouragement and information of those engaged in the work." "The committee invites the assistance of all persons interested in its special subjects and all organizations for social improvement." "The function of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness is not to undertake case work, but to educate the public to an understanding of eye difficulties in such a way that they may apply the knowledge both to themselves and to their children. It is found on the whole that general health organizations touch very lightly upon the question of conservation of sight. The Committee has prepared a large quantity of literature, has a loan collection of 600 slides, issues posters, helps in legislative campaigns, single and in courses. So far as legislative work is concerned, the National Committee assists in drawing up bills to prevent blindness, from ophthalmia neonatorum, from the use of the roller towel, for financial State assistance in establishing classes for conservation of vision, for the control of wood alcohol, for making certain communicable diseases, such as trachoma, reportable, etc. Further, upon request, it sends a field secretary into any State, either to aid in appearing before legislators and special committees or in making an educational tour of the State for the purpose of preparing the lay mind for the necessity of such law."

The National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness contains the names of several well-known American ophthalmic surgeons and the Hon. William H. Taft, Chief Justice, is the Honorary President. All educationalists know that in order
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to teach successfully, one must not be afraid of repetition; they also know how important it is to amplify what is spoken or written by clear illustrations. The literature which has been sent to us is well adapted to set forth in a striking way some of the many ills connected with diseases of the eye. The roller towel pamphlet contains excellent pictures of severe cases of trachoma as well as a picture showing an adult and a small child at work upon the same towel; trachoma, again, forms the chief burden of the "News Letter" No. 33. Ophthalmia neonatorum naturally comes in for a great deal of attention. Capital pictures are provided of children playing with scissors, pencils, buttonhooks and fireworks, "deadly play fellows." Besides these pictorial lessons, there are some reprints from the Parents Magazine, mostly written by Mrs. Hathaway, the Secretary of the Committee; some of these are adapted from well-known fairy tales and from books for little children; these are excellent, particularly the adaptation from the "Arabian Nights," where the Genie becomes the foul fiend of Columbian Spirit.

The eighth annual report of the Committee is included in the literature; it forms a brochure of 108 pages and is largely statistical. Two other pamphlets (1) concerning common causes of blindness in children and of the means and methods of prevention; and (2) a manual of conservation of vision classes, are excellent, well printed in clear type on very good paper and liberally illustrated.

There can be no doubt that such a Society is doing a great work in the United States, and in view of the recent report in this country on the causes and prevention of blindness, it is much to be hoped that work on similar lines will be undertaken in Great Britain at an early date. Many years have passed since the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom issued a memorandum on the subject of blindness due to ophthalmia neonatorum to the Local Government Board, and a deputation headed by Sir William Bowman and Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson waited on the authorities and urged that, among other measures, the Registrar of Births should hand to each person notifying a birth a printed statement calling attention to the dangers of this disease. A full report of the proceedings will be found in Vol. V of the Transactions (page 31), from which it would appear that it was urged that the Registrars would object to this extra work and that the cost would be something over £7,000 per annum. No estimate was given of the sum that would be saved by the community in eradicating this, the chief cause of preventable blindness in children. Times have changed since that date and we honestly believe that the Ministry of Health at the present time is fully alive to the absolute necessity of dealing with this and other causes of blindness.