

Letters, Notes, and Answers

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Nocturnal Cramp

"BETA" writes: Forty years ago I was advised by a postman to wear a knee-length woollen stocking in bed. This I promptly did, and have not suffered from cramp since then.

Income Tax

Income Accruing Abroad

"H.," who is at present on foreign service, asks whether he and his wife will be liable for income tax, when he is serving in the United Kingdom, in respect of income arising in Australia but not remitted here. The income is applied to reducing loans made to "H." in the voluntary assistance of a relative and in payment of life assurance premiums.

** Assuming that "H." is not coming to the United Kingdom merely for a temporary stay he will be liable as an ordinary resident to account for tax on the income arising abroad, whether it is remitted or not. There is no separate allowance due to his wife, and in effect the two incomes will be aggregated for taxation. Our correspondent may, however, be entitled to some relief from this taxation—(a) on the amount of the premiums paid to the life assurance company, (b) in respect of any Australian income tax paid on the income, and (c) some small allowance if the assisted relative can fairly be said to be "dependent" on the assistance—but this is unlikely, as the repayments of capital would have to be excluded from the calculation of the assistance.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

Motor Car Insurance

Mr. L. FERRIS-SCOTT, F.C.A. (hon. secretary, Medical Insurance Agency, B.M.A. House, Tavistock Square, W.C.1), writes: In the *Journal* of December 26, 1936, you were good enough to publish a letter, authorized by the Committee of Management of the M.I.A., in which I set out the revised manner of charging premiums under the Doctors' Special Motor Car Policy, which is underwritten only for the M.I.A. at Lloyd's, and the reduced rates charged owing to an increase in the rebate allowed by the M.I.A. and an increase also in the no-claim bonus granted by underwriters. The Agency has received several letters from members interested, and two of the questions which are asked are: Is the no-claim bonus allowed upon transfer from another insurance company or underwriters? The answer, of course, is "Yes"—that by transferring to the Doctors' Special Motor Car Policy medical practitioners gain advantages and lose nothing. The second question is: Are the extra premiums charged for certain defined areas necessarily payable in connexion with the Doctors' Special Motor Car

Policy? The answer is that these are not necessarily payable, and in fact are charged by underwriters under this special policy only where the previous claims experience makes it essential. For the rest the extremely low net premiums charged appear to give great satisfaction.

Bromide Intoxication

Dr. J. E. J. PALSER (Muswell Hill) writes: The paper on bromide intoxication in your issue of November 14 (p. 957) and "B. P.'s" inquiry (December 12, p. 1242) about the occurrence of this condition in epilepsy, and the experience of medical officers of asylums and institutions for epileptics, prompt me to record the following. During an appointment which I held for seven months in 1930 and 1931 on the staff of a mental hospital a middle-aged female epileptic imbecile, who had long been receiving the usual doses of potassium bromide, became gradually stuporous, developed constant minor twitchings, sank into coma, and died. About two months later I came across Wagner and Bunbury's paper (*J. Amer. med. Ass.*, 1930, 95, 1725), which is quoted in the recent paper in the *B.M.J.* and the probable significance of the above case at once occurred to me. The same volume of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* contains accounts of bromide intoxication (not quoted in the recent *B.M.J.* paper) on pages 84 (Harris and Hauser) and 826 (Andrews), quoted from *Virginia Medical Monthly*, 1930, 57, 304). At about the same time as the above-mentioned case a middle-aged or elderly female psychotic (non-epileptic, non-imbecile) patient, who had been receiving barbitone for a long time, became stuporous and died without definite physical signs of disease. It is perhaps difficult in mental cases to tell whether such deaths are due to sedatives or to the mental condition.

The Earliest Sanatoria in England

Dr. RICHARD J. CYRIAX (Leamington Spa) writes: Dr. George Bodington (1799-1882), of Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire, is generally, if not universally, recognized as the pioneer of the sanatorium treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis, and if this claim is admitted the institutions in which he carried out this treatment must be regarded as the earliest sanatoria in England. His methods, which consisted principally of exposure to fresh air, graduated exercise, and a nutritious diet, were fully described in his book *An Essay on the Treatment and Cure of Pulmonary Consumption* (1840). He was practising them in 1833, but may have done so previously. In 1836 he became the proprietor of a private lunatic asylum at Driffold House, Sutton Coldfield, and his writings afford definite evidence that during the next few years he received there as resident patients cases not only of insanity but also of phthisis. He then rented the White House, Maney, near Driffold House, for the reception only of cases of phthisis; it was ready for their occupation, if not in actual use, in January, 1840. He is known to have received some cases of phthisis at the White House, but closed it in 1842 or 1843, and then devoted himself entirely to his insane patients at Driffold House. Driffold House was thus the parent institution, but the White House seems to have been the first to be used solely for the sanatorium treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis, and hence to have been the earliest sanatorium in England. Both these houses have recently been pulled down. Photographs and descriptions of them appeared in the *British Journal of Tuberculosis*, January, 1925.

False Calls for London Ambulances

Medical practitioners will be glad to know that any person who gives false information which would reasonably lead to the dispatch of one of the London County Council's ambulances is now liable on summary conviction to a penalty up to £25, unless he can satisfy the court that he had reasonable cause to believe that his information was correct. This provision has been obtained by the L.C.C. under its General Powers Act of 1936, in view of the large and growing number of false calls, which may have been malicious in origin, received in the last few years by the London Ambulance Service.

Corrigendum

Owing to an error in the preparation of Dr. L. E. Houghton's article—"Blood Examinations in Pulmonary Tuberculosis"—which was published in the *Journal* of December 19, 1936, "blood count" was printed instead of "Bonsdorff count" in the first four tables under the heading "Prognosis."