

voluntary hospitals, and the medical profession, to be put in complete charge of all hospital finances. Dr. ELLIOT said he was aware that opinions had been expressed on the lines indicated in the first part of the question, but he could not commit himself to the view that the action proposed by Mr. Adams would provide an appropriate solution.

Sensitivity to Mustard Gas.—On May 14 Mr. G. GRIFFITHS asked the Home Secretary whether, in view of the statement in the *Air Raid Precautions Handbook* No. 3 that all persons not previously exposed were about equally sensitive to mustard gas, he would give details of the experiments by which the conclusions of Professor Marshall and others, published in the *Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics* for 1929, that some people were 600 times as sensitive as others, were refuted. Mr. LLOYD said he gathered that Mr. Griffiths referred to a report published in 1919. The experiments described in that report were carried out with comparatively high concentrations of gas, whereas the statement in the handbook reflected recent similar experiments with lower concentrations. The difference in experience was probably due to that difference in concentration.

Progress of Silicosis Investigations.—On June 14 Mr. J. GRIFFITHS asked what further steps it was proposed to take in the investigation into the problem of silicosis and other lung diseases in the anthracite coalfield of South Wales. Earl WINTERTON replied that as soon as the examination of the data and material recently collected at Ammanford had been completed the Medical Research Council proposed to extend the investigation to at least one further colliery. Thereafter a report on the whole of the findings would be prepared.

Remuneration of Air Force Medical Officers.—Mr. DENVILLE asked on June 16 if the Secretary of State for Air would give immediate consideration to the complaint of medical officers attached to the Royal Air Force recruiting depots of the insufficiency of their remuneration and of the insecurity of their engagement. Captain BALFOUR replied that consideration had been given to the representations made by the officers referred to, but it had not been possible to modify their conditions of employment.

Vaccine Therapy in Foot-and-Mouth Disease.—On June 20 Sir JOSEPH LEECH asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he was conferring with the Danish Government on the results of the foot-and-mouth vaccine experiments at Reims Island, and whether His Majesty's Government was testing the efficacy of the vaccine. Mr. MORRISON replied: I have seen reports on the active immunization of animals against foot-and-mouth disease in Germany. In a preliminary scientific account that has been published no details are given of the methods of preparation of the vaccine, but it is stated that they will be published in the near future. The results of the use of the vaccine in the field will also be published later. The Foot-and-Mouth Disease Research Committee is aware of the work which has been carried out in Denmark and its recent application in Germany, and is keeping in touch with the situation.

Slum Clearance.—In England and Wales some 200,000 slum houses have already been demolished, closed, or made fit, and a further 250,000, occupied by about 1,000,000 persons, still fall to be dealt with. Action has been initiated in respect of about 170,000 of these. In the twelve months ended April 30 last over 70,000 replacement houses were approved, as compared with about 59,000 approved in the preceding twelve months.

Notes in Brief

Six cases of small-pox were notified in England and Wales in 1938 up to and including the week ended May 21, 1938. During the quarter ended March 31, 1938, one death was assigned to small-pox.

With regard to the suggested legislation under which local authorities are to have power to decide whether or not there shall be compulsory pasteurization of milk sold in the area under their control, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture are in consultation with representatives of the associations of local authorities concerned.

The total number of houses completed by private enterprise in England and Wales with State assistance from 1919 up to March 31, 1938, was 426,276.

On May 31 Mr. RAMSBOTHAM informed Viscountess Astor that 7,576 ex-service men in receipt of disability pensions died in the twelve months ended last March, their mortality rate being 17.9 per 1,000. For the general male population of corresponding ages in England and Wales the mortality rate for the same period was approximately 13 per 1,000.

The number of houses required in Scotland to replace unfit houses and to put an end to overcrowding is about 250,000. Houses built by local authorities specifically for these purposes in 1937 numbered 12,857.

Medico-Legal

CRIMINAL NEGLIGENCE OF AN UNQUALIFIED PRACTITIONER

A practitioner of medicine, qualified or unqualified, must bring reasonable skill as well as care to his treatment of a patient, and if he attempts a task which is obviously far beyond his powers and harm results, his negligence may be regarded as so flagrant as to be criminal.

A school teacher, aged 23, who suffered from diabetes was for four years on a strict diet and insulin. On the advice of a friend she consulted an "osteopath and radiologist" named Herbert Jones, who said she had not got diabetes and never had had it, but was suffering from anaemia. He advised her to starve herself for four days and take nothing but orange juice. This she did, discontinuing her insulin, and in three days she had lost seven pounds. Her father telephoned to Jones, and he replied that she should continue with the treatment until she saw him in a few days' time. On that day she went into coma, and, although she was taken to hospital, she died a week after consulting Jones. He was sent for trial at the Gloucester Assizes before Mr. Justice Charles, and Dr. Thomas Haslett, a pathologist, said that cessation of the insulin treatment would lead to death. Jones, giving evidence in his own defence, said he had found no objective symptoms of diabetes but had found symptoms of anaemia. He put the patient on a four-days fast, with hot water and orange juice, as a preliminary clearing of the system for further treatment. He had intended getting a medical friend to carry out tests for diabetes. In answer to the judge, he said that he had not put the patient off insulin. In cross-examination, he admitted that he had no experience of diabetes and that he had made a mistake in his diagnosis in view of the absence of objective symptoms. Asked by the judge why he had not sent her back to her doctor when he heard she had been treated for diabetes, he replied that she had not come to him as a diabetic. He said he had taken up the science of healing twenty-three years ago, when he had cured by the laying on of hands a man who was dying of consumption.

The judge remarked that Jones's conduct was a danger to the State and to the public, and that if it had not been for his good character he would have been bound to send him to prison for a long term, not only to correct him but also to deter others who might be likely to undertake the treatment of sick folk without proper knowledge. He sentenced Jones to six months in the second division.