

Medical Notes in Parliament

Civilian Practice by R.A.M.C. Officers

On May 21 Dr. SUMMERSKILL asked the Secretary of State for War whether he was satisfied that it was in the best interests of the Army that officers of the R.A.M.C. should be permitted to attend, for fees, private patients outside the Service; and on what grounds he differentiated these cases from those of members of other callings or trades wishing to supplement their Army pay.

Mr. EDEN replied: Officers of the R.A.M.C. are not permitted to set up in private practice in competition with civilian medical practitioners, but they are free to act in a consultative capacity or do other similar work of a casual nature which does not interfere with the performance of their military duties, and I think this is a beneficial arrangement.

Dr. SUMMERSKILL asked if Mr. Eden had considered the difficulties created by this practice for commanding officers of units. A commanding officer was frequently asked by a man for extra leave in order to see private patients, and consequently the commanding officer had to get other men to do the work of the unit.

Mr. EDEN said that this rule had been in operation since 1924, and he was told that it worked very well. On the face of it it seemed to be a reasonable requirement.

Sir FRANCIS FREMANTLE asked if the Minister realized that the difficulties of supplying the needs of the civilian population were very great, and that it was only right that the doctors, whether serving in the Army or civilians, should be used whenever required.

Death of a Soldier after Inoculation.—On May 21 Mr. LEACH asked the Secretary of State for War what inoculation caused the death of Private Alfred Carlisle, aged 33, of the Leicestershire Regiment, on whom an inquest was held at the Grand Hotel, South Wigston, on May 6. Mr. EDEN said that Private Carlisle received his second inoculation against enteric fever on April 19. He was taken ill and died the same day. Post-mortem examination revealed the fact that he was suffering from a variety of medical conditions, more particularly disease of the main blood vessels of the heart. The cause of death was "acute dilatation of the heart," to which the inoculation was a contributory factor. It was found at the inquest that Private Carlisle's unsatisfactory state of health could not be determined by external medical examination, and as he made no complaint would not be suspected. It was added that no blame could be attached to the military authorities, and that everything possible was done by the medical officers.

Medical News

The annual meeting of the Faculty of Radiologists will be held at 32, Welbeck Street, W., on Friday and Saturday, May 31 and June 1. On May 31, at 11 a.m., Dr. S. Cochrane Shanks will deliver his presidential address, and at 2.30 p.m. there will be a discussion on "Gastroscopy and Gastric Radiology," to be opened by Dr. S. Whately Davidson and Lieutenant J. Dudfield Rose, followed by Mr. Hermon Taylor, Dr. G. R. Mather Cordiner, and Dr. J. C. Hawksley. On June 1, at 10.30 a.m., there will be a discussion on "The Value, Technique, and Limitations of Biopsy," to be opened by Professor G. Hadfield, Mr. L. E. C. Norbury, Dr. F. Ellis, Dr. R. W. Scarff, Mr. T. A. Green, and Dr. J. R. Nuttall.

The sixty-ninth annual congress of the American Association of Public Health will be held at Detroit (Michigan) from October 8 to 10. Further information can be obtained from the secretary, Dr. Reginald M. Atwater, 50, West 50th Street, New York.

After May 24 the address of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund will be 1, Balliol House, Manorfields, Putney, S.W.15.

At the annual meeting of the Yorkshire Council of the British Empire Cancer Campaign, held in Leeds at the Algernon Firth Institute of Pathology, reports on the progress of research were given by Dr. R. D. Passey, professor of experimental pathology and director of cancer research in the University of Leeds, and by Dr. H. N. Green, professor of pathology in the University of Sheffield. Professor Passey said there was real evidence that progress was being made, knowledge increasing, and useful work being done. Statistical inquiry into the possible effect of heredity on breast cancer, conducted by Dr. Mary Wainman, tended to show that there was not much to suggest that cancer in this region was hereditary. Professor Green said that work with new synthetic drugs offered hope that sooner or later a chemical agent capable of curing cancer would be discovered.

The Ling Physical Education Association (Hamilton House, Bidborough Street, W.C.1) has published at 1s. 2d. post free a printed report of the second conference on athletics for school children held in London last year. This report was drawn up by representatives of a number of bodies, including the Medical Officers of Schools Association.

Mr. Geo. E. Pearson has retired from the positions of managing director of the Wellcome Foundation, Ltd., and general manager of Burroughs Wellcome and Co. He will continue to act as governing director and chairman of the Wellcome Foundation, Ltd. Mr. T. R. G. Bennett has been appointed managing director of the Wellcome Foundation, Ltd., and general manager of Burroughs Wellcome and Co.

The National Society of Belgian Railways, some time before the invasion of Belgium, presented an ambulance train to the Belgian Health Service.

The Plunker Society, or Royal Society of New Zealand for the Health of Women and Children, is proposing to erect a monument to its founder, Sir Truby King, whose system of infant feeding largely contributed to making the infantile mortality in New Zealand the lowest in the world.

Professor F. Joliot and Mme. Irène Curie-Joliot have been awarded the quinquennial Barnard Gold Medal for "meritorious service to science" bestowed by Columbia University.

The Académie des Sciences of Paris has awarded the Montyon prize to Professor C. Levaditi of the Pasteur Institute for his important contributions to chemotherapy.

For the first time in the medical history of Argentina a woman has been appointed as associate professor (in obstetrics) in the Buenos Aires faculty—namely, Dr. Maria Teresa Ferrari de Gaudino.

According to preliminary official reports the number of hospital beds in the Soviet Union in 1938 amounted to 672,000. Of these 94,400 beds were reserved for railway, air transport, and psychiatric patients. Of the remainder 398,700 beds were in towns and 178,900 beds in rural districts. In 1913 the total number of hospital beds was 175,500 (of which 6,800 were reserved for lying-in hospitals), as compared with 121,700 in 1937. The total number of doctors in 1938 was 110,000, as compared with 19,785 in 1913.

In Iceland a petition with 21,000 signatures has been presented to the Government demanding that the consumption of alcohol should be forbidden during the war.

Health authorities in Winchester County, New York State, have recently discovered a woman, aged 101, who has probably been a typhoid carrier for eighty years.

Before the invasion of Holland, Professor N. H. Swellengrebel, head of the laboratory at the Amsterdam Tropical Institute, had been conducting an inquiry for six months on the question of the settlement of Jewish colonists in the Dutch West Indies.

The late Miss H. A. M. Thompson of Workington has left £20,000 "to promote research into the nature, causes, and cure of human diseases."

Dr. C. J. Polson (Inner Temple) has been called to the Bar.