

Cod-liver Oil for Tuberculous Patients

On May 29 Dr. SANTO JEGER asked the Minister of Health whether it was on his instructions that doctors were receiving communications from executive councils proposing surcharges in cases where cod-liver oil and malt extract had been prescribed in the treatment of tuberculosis. Mr. IAIN MACLEOD said there might be some misapprehension on this subject, on which he had issued no instructions. The Definition of Drugs Subcommittee advised that when cod-liver oil and malt was used for the treatment of tuberculosis it should be regarded as a drug. Its report also said that a doctor must be prepared to justify the ordering of the preparation as requisite for the treatment of his patient. He proposed to bring the report to the attention of executive councils and general practitioners, again.

Unused Beds.—On December 31, 1951, the number of hospital beds in England and Wales unoccupied through lack of staff was 32,668, or about one-fifteenth of the total number of beds.

Cathode-ray Costs.—The glass bulb for a 15-inch television cathode-ray tube costs £2, and the remaining materials about 7s. 6d.

Assistants in Practice.—The numbers of assistants employed by general medical practitioners in the National Health Service at March 31, 1950, and at the end of 1951 were 2,088 and 1,998 respectively.

Patient Costs.—A publication showing the patient costs in individual hospitals in England and Wales for the year ending March 31, 1951, is to be issued about the middle of June.

Medico-Legal**MENTAL CONDITION OF WITNESSES**

[FROM OUR MEDICO-LEGAL CORRESPONDENT]

On June 13, 1951, the Court of Criminal Appeal¹ dismissed the appeal of Dr. Sumatpalage Reginald Gunewardene from his conviction at the Central Criminal Court for manslaughter. He was tried together with Alice Hanson, who was convicted of the manslaughter of a single woman aged 27 by means of an illegal operation. Dr. Gunewardene was found to be an accessory before the fact and so a principal in the second degree, and was sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

The prosecution's case against him was that he drove the deceased woman, who was then pregnant, to Alice Hanson's house in order that an operation to procure an abortion should be performed, that after the operation he collected her from the house and drove her home again, that later he attended her at the house of one of his patients, and caused her to be taken to hospital. She died on the way to hospital of general septicaemia, thirty-six hours after the operation. Dr. Gunewardene's defence was that he had attended the woman for what he thought to be a normal miscarriage, and had had nothing to do with the operation.

The most important ground of appeal was that the judge at the Old Bailey had excluded the evidence of a doctor whom it was sought to call on Dr. Gunewardene's behalf to testify to the mental condition of a witness for the prosecution: this witness had given evidence highly prejudicial to Dr. Gunewardene, and his mental condition was likely to affect his truthfulness. The Court of Criminal Appeal, after reviewing the law on the question, upheld the trial judge's refusal. The position is that, while the defence can call witnesses to say that they believe, from their knowledge of a particular prosecution witness, that he is unworthy of credit upon his oath, they cannot be called to give the reasons for their belief: and it was just this the defence was seeking to do.

If a defence witness is called to say that he believes that a prosecution witness is unworthy of credit he can, however, be asked the reasons for his belief in cross-examination, and his answers cannot be contradicted, though they may of course be not believed.

¹[1951] Weekly Notes, p. 357.

Universities and Colleges**ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND**

At a meeting of the Council of the College, held on May 8, with Sir Cecil Wakeley, President, in the chair, Mr. E. H. Shaw, Dr. S. A. Henry, Mr. V. B. Green-Armytage, Sir William Kelsey Fry, and Professor John Kirk were admitted to the Fellowship, having been elected as practitioners of twenty years' standing. Mr. G. T. W. Cashell was admitted to the Fellowship *ad eundem*.

The Jacksonian prize was presented to Mr. Rodney Smith (St. George's) and an honorarium and a certificate of honourable mention to Mr. G. O. Jelly (Manchester). The John Hunter medal and triennial prize were presented to Dr. Cuthbert Dukes. The Begley prize was presented to Miss J. R. Carlton Jones (Charing Cross).

Sir Cecil Wakeley was reappointed representative of the College on the General Medical Council.

Sir Ernest Finch was appointed the Thomas Vicary Lecturer for 1953. The award of the first Lister award in ophthalmology and travelling scholarship to Dr. M. E. Langham was reported.

The Council accepted an offer from Lord Webb-Johnson to present the design of a College tie and the first consignment of ties.

Diplomas of Membership were presented to Y. A. Motala and to the 149 successful candidates whose names were printed in the report of the meeting of the Royal College of Physicians of London in the *Journal* of May 3 (p. 979).

Diplomas were granted, jointly with the Royal College of Physicians of London, as follows:

DIPLOMA IN ANAESTHETICS.—A. E. Hocking, W. N. Wild.

DIPLOMA IN CHILD HEALTH.—L. I. Phillips.

DIPLOMA IN TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE.—B. Devlin, A. K. Mitra, D. M. Montgomery.

The following hospitals were recognized under paragraph 23 of the Fellowship regulations: King George VI Hospital, Nairobi, resident surgical officer and two senior house-surgeons (until March 31, 1953), for one year. Mulago Hospital, Uganda, three senior residents in surgery, for one year. Victoria Hospital, Burnley, surgical registrar, senior house officer, two house-surgeons, all for six months (decennial revision). East Suffolk and Ipswich Hospital, *additional recognition*, senior house officer to fracture and orthopaedic department, for six months. Royal Lancaster Infirmary, first and second house-surgeons, two orthopaedic house-surgeons, all for six months (decennial revision). Brook General Hospital, London, two house-surgeons in thoracic surgery unit, for six months; two house-surgeons in neurosurgery unit, for six months. Lewisham Hospital, *additional recognition*, senior house officer in orthopaedic and traumatic department, for six months. St. Alfege's Hospital, Greenwich, *additional recognition*, third house-surgeon, for six months. Reedyford Hospital, Nelson, surgical registrar, for six months. Boundary Park General Hospital, Oldham, *additional recognition*, house-surgeon, general, for six months. Oldham Royal Infirmary, *additional recognition*, two house-surgeons, general, for six months.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Dr. E. M. Vaughan-Williams has been appointed University Demonstrator in Pharmacology from October 1, 1952, to September 30, 1957.

Anthony Clifford Allison, D.Phil. (Merton College), has been elected to a Staines Medical Research Fellowship at Exeter College, as from October 1.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

In Congregation on May 24 the degree of M.Chir. was conferred on Thomas Fenwick.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Percy Cyril Claude Garnham, M.D., D.P.H., has been appointed to the University Chair of Medical Protozoology tenable at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, from October 1.

John Archibald Browne Gray, M.B., B.Chir., of the National Institute for Medical Research, has been appointed to the University Readership in Physiology tenable at University College, from October 1.

The following candidates have been approved at the examinations indicated:

ACADEMIC POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE.—*Part I*: W. P. Gurassa, J. L. J. Lumey, A. C. Parkin, F. G. Tait.