

Dr. ALBERT MAURICE AMSLER, who died at Hawkhurst, Kent, on June 11, in his 76th year, was born on January 6, 1877, and was educated at St. Paul's School and at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, qualifying M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. in 1902. Three years later he took the degrees of M.B., B.S. of the University of London. After some clinical assistantships and locums he joined Dr. W. H. W. Attlee in partnership at Eton in 1906 and practised there until he retired in 1935. He was a physician to King Edward VII Hospital, Windsor, with charge of the obstetrical beds. He was also a member of the Eton College medical board. He was a sound general practitioner with a special flair for midwifery and, though sometimes blunt in manner, his patients were very fond of him. Apart from his profession, he was a remarkably versatile man. He had a host of interests and hobbies, and everything he undertook he seemed to do well. As a day boy at St. Paul's all his pocket-money came from the breeding and showing of bull-terriers, and in later years he judged them several times at Crufts. While a medical student he played rugby and water polo and boxed for Bart's, and at Eton he often judged in the College boxing and diving contests. He could raise plants and breed foreign birds when others failed, and many experts came to Eton to see his beautiful garden and his aviaries. His cabinet-making, too, was the envy of amateurs. A few weeks before his death he was awarded the Royal Horticultural Society's coveted Victoria Medal of Honour. He had previously won the Lyttel Lily cup of the society. In 1912 he married Victoria, daughter of Sir William Fairbank, of Windsor, and she, with his daughter and a grandson, survive him. Many will feel sad at his death, for he was a most interesting man, a good and kind doctor and friend, and a loyal colleague.—W. H. W. A.

Medico-Legal

DOCTOR'S ACTION AGAINST EX-PARTNERS FAILS

[FROM OUR MEDICO-LEGAL CORRESPONDENT]

On February 13¹ judgment was given by Lord Guthrie in the Court of Session against Dr. Joseph Frank Sharp, of Cricklewood, in an action against Dr. Alexander M'Gregor and his wife, Dr. Anne M'Gregor, claiming £3,000.

Dr. Sharp entered into partnership with the M'Gregors on April 1, 1948, and the partnership was dissolved on July 3 of the same year. Dr. Sharp's case was that it was dissolved on the terms that he was to be paid £1,000 down followed by £3,000 at the rate of £1,000 a year by instalments spread over three years. On July 4 a written agreement was entered into by Dr. Sharp, drawn up by his solicitor, in which he was employed by the M'Gregors as assistant at £1,000 a year. Dr. Sharp maintained that this position was intended to be only nominal, and that the "salary" was really the instalments on the sale of his share in the partnership.

The M'Gregors' case was that Dr. Sharp had accepted £1,000 in full settlement on dissolution of the partnership, and that the service agreement meant what it said and the salary was supposed to be earned. On November 12, 1948, they gave him a month's notice determining the service agreement, as under the agreement they were entitled to do.

In his judgment Lord Guthrie said that he had considerable sympathy with Dr. Sharp over the dissolution of the partnership, but his wife had admitted they had made a bad bargain when the agreement was signed, and the law could not protect them from the consequences of their failure to look after their own interests. He was not satisfied that Dr. Sharp had not agreed to the terms of the document drawn up by his own solicitor, or was induced to sign it by any misrepresentation made to him by Dr. M'Gregor. The action therefore failed.

¹ *Glasgow Herald*, February 14.

Medical Notes in Parliament

Tuberculosis in Foreign Workers

On June 19 Dr. BARNET STROSS asked whether the Minister of Health was aware that persons coming from abroad to seek work in this country might be suffering from active respiratory tuberculosis, and what steps he proposed to take to exclude those who suffered from this infectious disease.

Mr. MACLEOD said he was considering again with other Ministers concerned whether further steps should be taken. There was a check on aliens, but it might not reveal the presence of the disease. Organized groups of European volunteer workers were subject to x-ray examination. The question of the remainder was under discussion. He would bear in mind cases from Eire.

Identity Cards

Dr. A. D. D. BROUGHTON on June 19 asked whether it was still necessary, since the abolition of identity cards, for medical practitioners to ascertain the identity numbers of patients applying for treatment as temporary residents.

Mr. MACLEOD replied that this was necessary. Dr. Broughton then inquired whether the insertion of identity numbers upon National Health Service forms did not impose an additional administrative difficulty on medical practitioners. He asked whether Mr. Crookshank had discussed the difficulty with representatives of the medical profession before or immediately after the abolition of identity cards.

Mr. MACLEOD could not agree that the difficulties were so serious. It was not true that the elaborate administrative card system behind the identity card system still had to be maintained. Mr. Crookshank had made it clear that the numbers would be retained for the National Health Service Act.

Cross-infection Among Children

Colonel M. LIPTON on June 19 asked if Mr. Macleod was aware that one in five child patients contracted an additional illness while in hospital, according to the report by Dr. J. W. D. Goodall recently published in the *Lancet* (April 19, p. 807), and what action he was taking to deal with this.

Mr. I. MACLEOD said he was aware of the article. On the advice of the Central Health Services Council his predecessor as Minister of Health had sent to hospital authorities last October a series of memoranda on different aspects of the prevention of cross-infection in hospitals. Hospital authorities, as their capital resources permitted, were improving old-fashioned children's wards. At least half the cross-infections were common colds. It was true that many hospital authorities were not carrying out to the full the instructions sent to them, and he thanked Colonel Lipton for the publicity he had given to the matter.

Unpunctual Doctors

Colonel M. LIPTON also asked on June 19 what action Mr. Macleod was taking to deal with the unpunctual attendance of doctors at hospital out-patient clinics.

Mr. MACLEOD replied that this was a matter for the hospital authorities concerned. Colonel LIPTON asked whether these doctors were not reasonably well paid. Ought they not to "clock-in" on time to ensure a humane and efficient out-patient service? Mr. MACLEOD said the time of patients was valuable, but the House should not forget how very valuable also was the time of consultants and specialists.

Mr. D. CHAPMAN asked Mr. Macleod to encourage hospitals to tighten their appointments systems so that out-patients attended at times suitable to the specialists. Mr. Macleod