

tioned above. Photosensitivity is a known toxic effect of this preparation, but our case did not show this type of reaction, although she did have this curious photophobia which bothered her for the first three days.—We are, etc.,

R. B. COLES.
J. PHILLIPS.
J. B. NUTTALL.

Northampton.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Greenberg, M., and Greenspan, W. *J. Amer. med. Ass.*, 1962, 181, 454.
² Pollen, R. H., *New Engl. J. Med.*, 1964, 271, 673.

Termination of Pregnancy

SIR,—Last March, at an introductory course in family psychiatry at this institute, a group of 21 general practitioners and colleagues in public health expressed their views on the grounds for the termination of pregnancy. Thirteen doctors (62% of the sample) expressed themselves in favour of the first alternative of granting termination to the woman at her request in the first three months, thus extending birth control into the first trimester. A further six supported the second alternative that social grounds should be taken into account when termination is considered by the doctor; they thus supported Mr. David Steel's Bill. No doctor favoured the third alternative of merely making present case law into legislation—the B.M.A. viewpoint. Two dissented from any of the above three views.

Thus 90% of this sample of doctors were in favour of progressive legislation. The sample is small, but no smaller than the B.M.A. committee representing the views of the profession. The sample may not have represented doctors as a whole; neither may have the B.M.A. committee. It would be sad if a committee supposedly acting for the profession succeeded in limiting the Bill now before Parliament and produced an Act to which the majority of doctors were not attuned. On a matter of such public and professional importance there would seem to be strong reasons for ascertaining the views of the medical profession by a sample survey.—I am, etc.,

JOHN G. HOWELLS.

Institute of Family Psychiatry,
Ipswich and East Suffolk Hospital,
Ipswich, Suffolk.

New Forms for Vaccination

SIR,—I am writing to complain about the design and layout of these forms in the hope that the matter can be taken up and the forms improved, so that they can be stored more readily, be more readily distinguishable, and require less work in their completion. My complaints are centred on:

Size: they should be no larger than forms E.C.7, so that they can fit into the medical record envelope. Some doctors might like to file them separately, but it is difficult to catch defaulters unless one has a very distinctive record in their notes, which strikes the eye immediately when the patient attends for some other cause. After completion of the vaccination course the form is immedi-

ately dispatched to the executive council for payment.

The forms should be made of a similar card as E.C.7, as this is much more easily handled in a busy vaccination clinic.

The forms should be in different colours, so that they may be readily distinguished.

Surely there is no need for the form to be signed by the patient and the doctor. We have been paid for years by the local authority, who require no such signatures. In the present shortage of doctors we have more urgent things to do with our time than collecting and adding autographs.—I am, etc.,

London N.W.10.

RONALD LAW.

SIR,—I note that the new forms for recording details of vaccination and immunization received from the executive council this week now have a section to be completed and signed by the patient, parent, or guardian. This new time-wasting procedure should be stopped.

It now has to be explained to a mother why she has to sign a form for vaccination whereas she knows that with her previous children she did not. The infant then has to be deposited in a safe place along with the shopping bag in order to free a hand with which to write. If in the bustle of a busy surgery the signature is forgotten there is all the trouble of writing to the patient, or getting her to attend again, merely to rectify this omission. When the old forms were sent direct to the local health authority there was no need for a signature: why should there be one now?

Is it perhaps that the Ministry of Health fear that they have now driven this profession, notwithstanding the integrity expected of a profession, to such a point that members may now contemplate obtaining money by fraud?—I am, etc.,

Woolston,
Warrington.

P. J. BARBER.

St. Teresa's Hospital

SIR,—As a former resident house-officer at St. Teresa's Hospital, Wimbledon, I would like to endorse every word written by Dr. R. I. L. Smallwood (1 April, p. 54).

For those who do not know the hospital it is important to realize that the regional hospital board are dispensing with the services, not of an anachronistic, crumbling, understaffed nursing home, but of a modern, purpose-built, and well-equipped obstetrical unit. In terms of facilities, equipment, and medical and nursing staff St. Teresa's compares favourably with anything the National Health Service has itself provided anywhere.

Such aspects of a hospital can be quantified. More important still are the unmeasurable qualities of care in terms of the individual patient. If the Minister of Health asked any medical student or student nurse who has trained at St. Teresa's, he would hear a glowing tribute on those aspects of medical and personal care which really matter and which this hospital, more than any other I have heard of, gives to its patients and staff.

The majority of beds at St. Teresa's have been used by the N.H.S. under contract, and I do not believe that the opening of a new

unit four miles away—presumably intended to be specialized—justifies this extraordinary decision to withdraw N.H.S. support. The attitude of the medical planners defies comprehension. St. Teresa's provides a service of which the local community are proud, and for which they are demonstrably grateful: it should be supported too by the Minister and his regional board.—I am, etc.,

Reading,
Berks.

MICHAEL ROGERS.

Drinking Drivers

SIR,—The Home Office circular¹ concerns appointment of police surgeons and gives opinions pertinent to such.

The Road Safety Bill² provides that blood samples can only be taken by a doctor.

Neither in the circular nor in the Road Safety Bill is it found that "the doctor's duty will be limited to taking the sample of blood and, as heretofore, in giving an opinion on the fitness or otherwise of the accused to be detained," as stated in the leading article (8 April, p. 66).

It is in the interests of justice that suspects should be examined by doctors who are skilled and experienced in medico-legal work, and it is important that doctors with the necessary qualifications and experience should be available to the police.³

Clinical examination must remain an essential part of the investigation of persons charged with being unfit to drive through drink or a drug in order that the presence of illness or injury may be excluded and so that any necessary treatment can be given.⁴ No certificate of fitness or otherwise of a person to be detained should be given unless based upon an adequate medical examination. There is inevitably some delay in obtaining the results of urine or blood analysis.

A survey of 546 cases from the north-east of England showed that the mean urine alcohol concentration for those drivers found unfit to drive was 287 mg./100 ml.⁵ (approximately 215 mg./100 ml. for blood). "It may be of interest to record that in 527 cases analysed for the Metropolitan Police in the first six months of 1962 only 40 registered below 150 mg./100 ml. of blood: 166 came within the group 150 mg. to 200 mg./100 ml.; 293 came within the group 200 mg. to 300 mg./100 ml.; and 28 exceeded 300 mg./100 ml."⁶

If the above survey cases imply the non-recognition of intoxication at lower levels than stated then it becomes the more important under the provisions of the Road Safety Bill (80 mg./100 ml.) that a doctor should make an examination to determine if possible the reason for a policeman's suspicion—and do so as soon as possible, bearing in mind the many conditions which may simulate intoxication.⁷—I am, etc.,

J. A. G. CLARKE,

Hon. Secretary,
The Association of Police Surgeons
of Great Britain.

Dudley,
Worcestershire.

REFERENCES

- ¹ *Appointment of Police Surgeons*, Home Office Circular No. 51, 1967, London.
² *Road Safety Bill (179)*, 1967, London.
³ *The Drinking Driver*, 1965, Appendix A, London.
⁴ *The Drinking Driver*, 1965, p. 38, Summary 2, London.
⁵ Haisman, M. F. et al., 1963, Op. cit. (quoted in *The Drinking Driver*).
⁶ Sir Joseph Simpson, K.B.E., *Alcohol and Road Traffic*, 1963, p. 49, London.
⁷ *The Drinking Driver*, 1965, pp. 18–20, London.