News and Notes

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Coxsackie Virus

The following notes are based on reports to the Public Health Laboratory Service from public health and hospital laboratories in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland for the week ending 27 November.

Infection with Coxsackie A16 virus has shown a tendency to recur in a three-year cycle in Great Britain in recent years, with peaks in 1964 and 1967. This year there have again been an unusually large number of cases. The total number of reports received in the first ten months of the year was 169, compared with the previous highest annual total of 74 in 1967.

Analysis of reports received up to the end of October according to the week in which the laboratory received the specimen (a date that is usually fairly close to the onset of the patient's illness) shows two periods of high prevalence, one in the autumn of 1969 and one in the early summer this year. Owing to the time taken to type these viruses there is inevitable delay in reporting them, and it is not possible to say whether the increased summer prevalence continued into the autumn. Most of the cases were reported from the south of England, mainly from the south-east.

The age and sex of 151 patients from whom specimens were received in the 12 months up to the end of August 1970 are shown in the Table.

The large majority of patients were children, most of them aged 1-4 years. In this age group there were twice as many males as females, though in children aged 5-9 and in adults the ratio was reversed. All but 18 of the patients were suffering from skin eruptions, the majority of them stated to be typical of the lesions of hand-foot-and-mouth disease. The virus was reported to have been isolated from several associated cases or symptomless excreters in each of 16 different localities in the south and south-east of England. In many instances there were multiple cases among members of the same household, all with hand-foot-and-mouth disease. One such outbreak that took place among the families of boys at a residential school and the surrounding area in June 1969 was described in these columns earlier (7 February, p. 373). In this and some other areas the cases reported probably constituted only a small proportion of the number of infections occurring in the locality.

TABLE.—*Age and Sex of Patients with Coxsackie A16 Infection*

Age (yrs.)	Male	Female	Total	
			No.	Per Cent.
<1	5	3	8	5·3
1–4	44	20	64	42·4
5–9	4	14	18	11·9
10–14	5	0	5	3·3
"Child"	2	7	11*	7·3
All children	60	44	106*	70·2
15–24	1	3	4	2·6
25–44	7	11	18	11·9
45 and over	0	0	0	—
"Adult"	1	3	4	2·6
All adults	9	17	26	17·1
Not stated	10	9	19	12·6
Total	79	70	151*	100

*Includes two patients sex not stated.

Infectious Diseases

Week Ended 27 November

Typhoid Fever: Merton (G.L.C.) 1, Redbridge (G.L.C.) 1, Oxford C.B. 1.

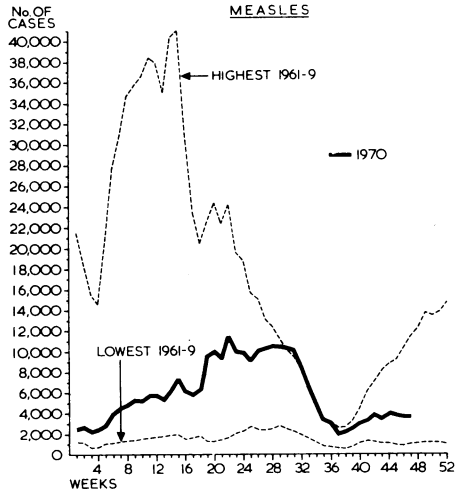
Paratyphoid Fever: Benfleet U.D. (Essex) 2, Sutton (G.L.C.) 1.

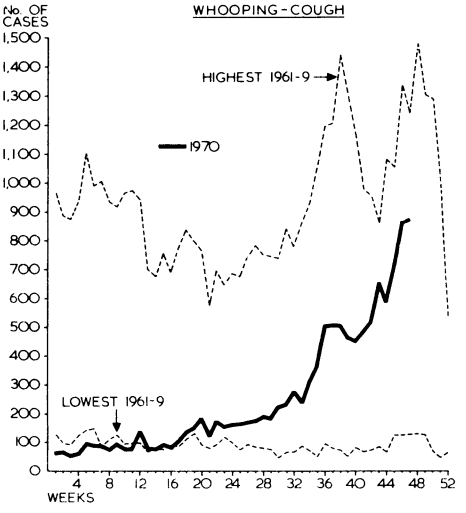
Malaria: Liverpool C.B. 1, Selby U.D. (Yorks W.R.) 1.

Leptospirosis: Okehampton R.D. (Devon) 1, Langport R.D. (Somerset) 1.

Graphs of Infectious Diseases

The graphs below show the uncorrected numbers of cases in England and Wales. The figures for 1970 are compared with the highest and lowest figures for each week in the previous nine years.





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PARLIAMENT

Industrial Relations Bill

The Industrial Relations Bill, which was presented in the Commons on 1 December and published on 3 December,[1] seeks to amend the law relating to organizations of employers and organizations of workers. It provides for the establishment of a National Industrial Relations Court and for extending the jurisdiction of industrial tribunals; for appointing a Chief Registrar of Trade Unions and Employers' Associations; and for establishing a Commission on Industrial Relations. The Government has announced that the Bill will be considered by a Committee of the whole House.

Professional Workers

The Bill makes no special provision for professional workers such as doctors, but the wide definition of "worker" shows that those in the N.H.S., local authorities, and universities would be included in the Act. "Worker" is defined as a person who works (a) under a contract of employment, or (b) under any other contract (whether express or implied, and, if express, whether oral or in writing) whereby he undertakes to perform personally any work or services for another party to the contract who is not a professional client of his, or (c) in employment under or for the purposes of a Government department (otherwise than as a member of the naval, military, or air forces of the Crown or of any women's service administered by the Defence Council) in so far as any such employment does not fall within either of the preceding paragraphs.

Clause 5 gives to every worker the right to belong to an independent trade union, to take part in its activities, and to seek office in that union. It also gives the worker the right not to belong to an independent trade union or other organization of workers.

Clause 11 states that "agency shop agreement" means an agreement made between an employer and one or more trade unions whereby the employer agrees, in respect of workers of one or more descriptions specified in the agreement, that their terms and conditions of employment shall include a condition that every such worker must either (a) be or become a member of that trade union or of one of those trade unions, as the case may be, or (b) agree to pay appropriate contributions to that trade union, or (as the case may be) to one of those trade union, in lieu of membership or agree to pay equivalent contributions to a charity.

Clause 32 implies that a written collective agreement is intended by the parties to it to be a legally enforceable contract, and clause 33 extends that presumption to an award or decision made by a voluntary negotiating body established by a procedure agreement. When action is taken contrary to an agreement the Secretary of State will be empowered to apply to the Industrial Court for remediable action.

Clause 48 enables one-fifth of the employees within a bargaining unit (or two-fifths if the court has ordered that the union or panel is to be the sole bargaining unit) to apply to the Industrial Court on the ground that the recognized union or joint negotiating panel does not adequately represent the employees or a section of them.

Definition of Trade Union

Clause 57 provides a new definition of a trade union as an organization of workers registered with the Chief Registrar of Trade Unions and Employers' Organizations, and clause 61 sets out the guiding principles which are to govern the conduct of organizations of workers whether registered or not. Every member is to have the right to terminate his membership. No member is to be excluded by unreasonable discrimination from holding office, from voting, or from taking part in meetings. The voting in any ballot of the organization is to be kept secret. No member is to be subjected to unfair disciplinary action, in particular for refusing or failing to take any action which would constitute unfair industrial practice.

Any organization of workers will be able to apply for registration as a trade union.

Clause 114 affirms the right of an employee to withdraw his labour; and no court will be able, by granting an injunction restraining an employee from working in accordance with a lawful contract of employment, to compel him to take part in a strike or any irregular industrial action.

Breach of Contract

Clause 118 protects individuals who agree together to break their own contracts of employment, but neither organizations nor individuals other than registered trade unions and registered employers' associations are protected from proceedings before the Industrial Court for inducing a breach of contract in such cases.

Clause 124 enables the Secretary of State to apply to the Industrial Court for an order when industrial action is likely to endanger the national economy, national security, public health, or public order and he considers that deferment of the industrial action would be conducive to a settlement by negotiation.

Clause 125 empowers the Industrial Court to make an order directing that no person specified shall call or support a strike for the period of the order (not exceeding 60 days).

Clause 144 provides for application of the Bill to employment under the Crown, which is to mean employment under or for the purposes of a Government department.

[1] Bill 60. London, H.M.S.O. Price 18s.

Misuse of Drugs Bill

The new Misuse of Drugs Bill (see *B.M.J.*, 14 November, p. 440), as amended by the Standing Committee on the Bill, has now been published (London, H.M.S.O.).

Questions in the Commons

National Heart Hospital

In a written answer given in the Commons on 4 December Mr. MICHAEL ALISON, Under Secretary, Health and Social Security, said that the boards of governors of the National Heart and Brompton hospitals were informed in 1968 that it was proposed to start rebuilding both hospitals in 1973-4 on the site of the Brompton Hospital. The two associated institutes of the University of London were also to be amalgamated and rebuilt as part of that redevelopment. The medical and lay staffs of the hospitals and institutes had been engaged jointly in planning the new centre since 1967. After consultation with the university the Secretary of State for Social Services had now decided that the two hospitals would be brought under a single board of governors on 1 April 1971.

Abortions

Asked in the Commons on 1 December how many abortions had now taken place in N.H.S. hospitals since the passing of the Abortion Act, Mr. MICHAEL ALISON, Under Secretary, Health and Social Security, said that up to 28 October, 1970 the number was 84,764.

Common Market Medical Practice

In the Commons on 1 December Mr. E. P. DEAKINS (Walthamstow, West, Lab.) asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether, in view of the Government's acceptance of the provisions of the Treaty of Rome relating to free movement of labour, he would discuss with the G.M.C. or other appropriate body the amendment of those rules which prescribe the necessary qualifications for the practice of medicine within the United Kingdom. Could the Secretary of State assure the House that in the event of Britain joining the Common Market the standards of medical practice in this country required of foreign doctors who would be allowed to practise here would be at least the equivalent of those required of United Kingdom doctors?

Sir KEITH JOSEPH said that as yet it was premature to formulate amendments to the arrangements for registration of doctors, but the Government was in touch with the General Medical Council on the subject. The purpose of the discussions going on in Common Market countries was to unify registration qualifications.

Treatment of Cancer

On 1 December, in oral answers to questions about evaluating new methods of treating cancer, with particular reference to the methods of Dr. Issels, Sir KEITH JOSEPH, Secretary of State for Social Services, said that the M.R.C. and his own department both supported research on methods of treating cancer. Proposals were adjudged on their scientific merits. The question of an inquiry into Dr. Issels's methods would be considered by the Joint Co-ordinating Committee for Cancer Research, on which the M.R.C. was represented, as soon as details of the treatment had been published and studied.

Prescription Charges

In a written answer given on 1 December Mr. PAUL DEAN, Under Secretary of State, Health and Social Security, said that the

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new income levels to qualify for prescription exemption certificates would apply from 1 April 1971; parents with slightly lower incomes could, however, apply now. All children up to 15 were exempt. Forms were always available, and claims could be made either by post or in person.

Definition of Drugs

Asked why the Macgregor committee on the definition of drugs had been discontinued, Mr. MICHAEL ALISON, Under Secretary of State, Health and Social Security, said it was because inquiries showed that *Proplist*, the publication containing the committee's classifications, was little used by general practitioners. The Health Services Councils were making new arrangements for advising whether certain borderline substances should be regarded as drugs or as foods, toilet preparations, etc.

Reciprocal Agreements

In a written answer given in the Commons on 3 December, Mr. DEAN, Under Secretary of State, Health and Social Security, said that at present there was no scope for a reciprocal arrangement between the N.H.S. and the United States schemes of hospital insurance for pensioners and elderly people. Apart from a system of medical assistance for poor people, those two insurance schemes were the only United States Government schemes providing medical or hospital treatment.

MEDICAL NEWS

Industrial Relations Bill

Below is the text of a letter (dated 2 December) from Mr. ROBERT CARR, Secretary of State for Employment, to Dr. DEREK STEVENSON, Secretary of the B.M.A., about the Government's Industrial Relations Bill (see *B.M.J.*, 28 November, p. 507, and *Supplement*, p. 42).

"Thank you for your letter of 23 November. I found our meeting on 19 November most useful in alerting us to the anxieties felt by the medical profession with regard to the effect on the profession of our proposed industrial relations legislation.

"I am glad to reiterate the assurance I gave you at the meeting. I shall consider, carefully and seriously, the case for modifying some of our proposals in their application to the professions. If after consideration it seems desirable to introduce such modifications—and of course, at this stage, I can make no promises—then I shall be prepared to move the necessary amendments to the Bill in Committee.

"I would like to make it clear that I would have no objection to this letter being published in any way you might wish.

"I am sending a copy of your letter and mine to Sir Keith Joseph, and also to Mr. Peacock of the British Dental Association, Miss Hall of the Royal College of Nursing, and Miss Mee of the Royal College of Midwives."

Medical Demonstration

Led by banners asking, "Are you rich enough to be sick?", about 200 students marched in orderly procession last week through London. After forming up near Regent's Park they traversed Harley Street and then wheeled left to gain Tavistock Square. There they paused to hand a statement to the Secretary of the B.M.A., and they then progressed to the Royal Free Hospital for a meeting addressed by Professor Peter Townsend, chairman of the Child Poverty Action Group.

Banners and slogans protested against the charges for medical and dental treatment in the Health Service, the existence on private practice, the absence of a tax on sweets, and the discontinuance of free school milk. The statement delivered to B.M.A. House also declared that the Health Service has been increasingly threatened by the growth of private insurance. The more health had to be bought by the individual, it said, instead of being financed by the State through the taxpayer, the more it would become a prerogative of the rich. While the statement was being handed in by a deputation the remainder of the procession chanted slogans:

B.M.A. Stop the Cuts
Bureaucratic B.M.A.
B.M.A.: Private Practice

Artificial Limb Service in Scotland

Artificial limbs should be designed to be made up of component parts and the treatment and rehabilitation of amputees should be dealt with by a clinic team of experts led by a consultant surgeon are recommendations in a report of a Scottish working party just published. The working party, set up in October 1967 by the Secretary of State for Scotland was chaired by Mrs. M. B. A. DENNY, a member of the Western Regional Hospital Board, and included experts in the field of prosthetics. Other recommendations include the view that prosthetists and prosthetic technicians employed at limb-fitting centres should be employed by the N.H.S. rather than by private industry, as at present, and that the number of medical staff working in prosthetics should be increased. Further research is proposed into the interdependence of amputation and limb-fitting techniques, and the working party want a valuation unit to be set up to assess whether the prostheses and other devices supplied to amputees meet patients' needs as well as is technically possible, consistent with economy. The Secretary of State for Scotland is asking hospital authorities to study the report and to discuss the recommendations with the Scottish Home and Health Department early next year. The report, *The Future of the Artificial Limb Service in Scotland*, is published by H.M.S.O. (11s. (55p.) net).

Students' Procession in Harley Street.

New Nursing Research Unit

A new nursing research unit is to be set up in Edinburgh University. It will be the first in an academic department of nursing studies in a British university. The Scottish Home and Health Department has agreed to provide about £20,000 in the first full year with similar support in the following six years. The new unit will be an integral part of the university's department of nursing studies, and it will undertake operational research studies on various aspects of nursing activity in the N.H.S. in Scotland. The senior post in the unit, to be known as the senior lecturership in nursing research, will be permanently established by the university from the outset, and there will be four or five full-time research staff.

Whittingham Hospital Inquiry

Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Social Services, is setting up a committee of inquiry into the administration of and conditions at Whittingham Hospital, near Preston, Lancashire. Whittingham is a psychiatric hospital, and in January 1970, at the request of the hospital management committee, the police began investigating allegations which included ill-treatment of patients. The Director of Public Prosecutions, after considering the police report, decided in October that there were not sufficient grounds to institute criminal proceedings. However, at the end of September the police were called to investigate incidents which led to charges against a nurse on the staff.

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In court the nurse pleaded "guilty" to manslaughter of a patient and to causing grievous bodily harm. The main purpose of the inquiry, set up under section 70 of the N.H.S. Act, will be to examine the management of the hospital, the quality of patient care, the handling of complaints, and conditions in the hospital generally.

Grant for Mount Vernon

The Cancer Research Campaign has approved a grant of over £127,000 to the radiobiological research unit at Mount Vernon Hospital, Middlesex, for 1971. This is an increase of about £24,000 over the amount given to the unit in 1970. The Mount Vernon unit is principally engaged in the development of improved methods of cancer treatment, and current work centres on the search for a sensitizer to make cancer cells more susceptible to radiation treatment. The Cancer Research Campaign (formerly the British Empire Cancer Campaign for Research), supported entirely by the public, will allot more than £2,100,000 to individuals and institutions throughout Britain and the Commonwealth during 1971.

Florey Fellowship

The Australian National University, Canberra, and the Royal Society of London have awarded the first Florey Fellowship to Dr. J. H. PEARN, aged 30, a lecturer in child health at the University of Queensland. He will use the Fellowship to undertake two years' study in Britain on aspects of muscular disorders in children. The Florey fellowship scheme was established as a memorial to Lord Florey, and is financed from funds raised from campaigns conducted throughout Australia and Britain last year. The first British Fellow to travel to Australia under the scheme is expected to be announced next year.

Improved Medical Services in Gibraltar

A new health centre in Gibraltar will be built with a grant of £92,000 provided by the Overseas Development Administration. The centre will provide facilities for outpatients and other departments now at St. Bernard's, the only general hospital in Gibraltar. It will also house other medical and health services which are at present inadequately accommodated and scattered throughout the town. A pathology department and an isolation ward will also be added to St. Bernard's Hospital, the cost of which will be met from an O.D.A. grant of £80,600. All three projects are included in Gibraltar's 1970-3 development programme and have become necessary following the reorganization of the medical and public health services in Gibraltar.

Wolfson Institute of Occupational Health

An occupational health institute is to be built at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, with a grant of £253,000 from the Wolfson Foundation. The building, which should be ready in 1973, will contain environmental laboratory services, and the institute will carry out postgraduate teaching and research as well as organizing a school of industrial nursing.

Reports Received

Principles of Infant Feeding, a report by a joint subcommittee of the Standing Medical Advisory Committee and the Standing Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee of the Scottish Health Services Council. Published by H.M.S.O., November 1970.

Institute of Cancer Research, Royal Cancer Hospital, *Report for the Year 1969-1970*. Published by the Institute at 34 Sumner Place, London S.W.7.

People in the News

Sir BERNARD KATZ, professor of biophysics, University College, London University, has been re-elected biological secretary of the Royal Society.

Professor W. R. S. DOLL, regius professor of medicine, Oxford University, has been elected a member of the council of the Royal Society.

Miss E. MARGARET BUSSBY has been appointed chief nursing officer of the Queen's Institute of District Nursing. Miss Bussby has been the Institute's district nursing officer for South-east England since 1966.

Coming Events

Royal College of Physicians of London.—Clinical physiology session by Professor L. B. Strang, "Physiology of the Newborn—Nutrition and Temperature Control," 15 December. For details see advertisement on page xviii.

Croydon Medical Centre.—Details of lectures and case conferences of particular interest to general practitioners and hospital medical staff, January-March, are obtainable from the clinical tutor at the Centre, Mayday Hospital, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 7YE.

Institute of Orthopaedics.—Instructional course, "Rheumatic Diseases—II," Wednesdays, 6 January—31 March. Details of this and other activities from the secretary for postgraduate studies at the Institute, Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, 234 Great Portland Street, London W.1.

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.—Postgraduate symposium, presented by Manchester University Medical School, 20 January. The programme and application forms for tickets (£3 3s. including lunch) are obtainable from the secretary of the R.C.O.G., 27 Sussex Place, Regent's Park, London N.W.1.

"Computers in Medicine."—Second international symposium by the World Organization of General Systems and Cybernetics (British Chapter), 16-17 March 1971, Blackburn. President Lord Rosenheim. Applications must be made by 31 January and details are obtainable from the secretary, Blackburn College of Technology and Design, Feilden Street, Blackburn BB2 1LH.

Societies and Lectures

For attending lectures marked ● a fee is charged or a ticket is required. Applications should be made first to the institution concerned.

Monday, 14 December

HUNTERIAN SOCIETY.—At Plantation House, London E.C.3, 7.30 p.m., Dr. Macdonald Critchley: Man's Attitude to His Nose.●

INSTITUTE OF LARYNGOLOGY AND OTOLOGY.—5.30 p.m., Combined staff consultation clinical meeting.

Tuesday, 15 December

INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—4.30 p.m., Dr. D. D. Munro: Hair Growth.

ST. CHARLES'S HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTRE, LONDON.—8.45 p.m., Dr. R. J. Robinson: Some Topics in Paediatrics.

WESTMINSTER MEDICAL SCHOOL.—5.15 p.m., Professor D. M. Matthews: Individual Forms of Vitamins B_{12} in Health and Disease.

Wednesday, 16 December

HAROLD WOOD HOSPITAL.—At Academic Unit, 7.30 p.m., Heath memorial lecture by Mr. K. Callum: Clinical Review Surgery of Peptic Ulceration.

INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—4.30 p.m., Dr. M. Feiwel: Biology of the Dermis.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.—4.30 p.m., Erasmus Wilson demonstration by Professor W. G. Spector: Role of Macrophage in Inflammatory and Immunological Reactions.

ROYAL POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL.—10.15 a.m., Medical staff round.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS POSTGRADUATE CENTRE.—At Kent and Sussex Hospital, 12.45 p.m., Mr. J. D. Salmon: Retinal Detachment.●

WHITTINGTON HOSPITAL, LONDON.—At Academic Centre, 11.30 a.m., Dr. Wallace Brigden: Cardiomyopathies.

Thursday, 17 December

INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY.—12 noon, Professor N. Geschwind (Harvard): Anatomical Mechanisms of Acquired Reading Disorders.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.—5 p.m., Arris and Gale lecture by Mr. H. B. Devlin: Midgut Malrotation causing Intestinal Obstruction in Adult Patients—its Clinical Features, Pathology, and Management.

Friday, 18 December

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE REGIONAL NEUROLOGICAL CENTRE.—At Newcastle General Hospital, 5.30 p.m., Dr. D. Paty: Experience with Corticosteroids in Human and Experimental Demyelinating Disease.

ROYAL POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL.—10 a.m., Surgical staff round; 11 a.m., Sir Charles Illingworth: The Erudition of William Hunter; 12 noon, seasonal quiz.

Sunday, 20 December

EDGWARE POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SOCIETY.—At Edgware General Hospital, Modern Trends, 10 a.m., film; 11 a.m., Mr. R. J. Ryall, Dr. G. Bevan: Recent Advances in Gastroenterology.

Universities and Colleges

MANCHESTER

The title of professor emeritus has been conferred on Mr. A. M. Boyd, formerly professor of surgery and director of the department of surgery.

LONDON

Dr. J. M. Cameron has been appointed to the readership in forensic medicine tenable at the London Hospital Medical College.

The title of reader in surgical science has been conferred on Mr. M. Hobsley in respect of the post held by him at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School.

Notice to Authors

When original articles and letters for publication are not submitted exclusively to the *British Medical Journal* this must be stated.

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