

1. General practitioners must have the shilling levied on each item of each prescription in order to deter our daily visitors and discourage those who send a list of requirements by messenger.

2. If there is to be any interest taken in medical matters in five years' time, secretarial work will have to be delegated, in part at least.

3. With the domestic help situation as it is, the Minister will have to think up some way of allowing us to leave our telephone and house unattended for a few hours in the evening.

4. Vitamin preparations should only be allowed to patients suffering from a limited schedule of diseases.

5. Useless medicaments, including tonics, belladonna plasters, and most expectorant-sedative mixtures should be ruthlessly cut out; they and the vitamin preparations are wasting a shocking amount of the country's resources.

6. A few patients should be penalized when they treat their doctor in the heartless and selfish way they sometimes do.

7. Doctors' remuneration should be investigated by an impartial body.

If one were only Mr. Marquand's doctor, and could speak to him and earnestly ask him to keep this list in his pocket-wallet and read it over now and again, sooner or later we would progress to that happy but not necessarily opulent state for which the heart yearns.—I am, etc.,

Dungannon, Tyrone.

CONN MCCLUSKEY.

Ophthalmologists' Fees

SIR,—Most O.M.P.s will have heard of the new fee cut without surprise. The Ophthalmic Group Committee must have been heavily handicapped by the knowledge that a threat to resign would have left the Minister unmoved, since 80% of sight tests are already done by ophthalmic opticians, and they could presumably do them all if necessary. We are in a weak bargaining position, and if we stay there further cuts are likely to follow in due course.

The purpose of this letter is to suggest that the interests of the increasing number of ophthalmologists who wish the supplementary service to continue will best be served by accepting the principle that fees for sight tests should be negotiated jointly with the ophthalmic opticians. There is no doubt where the opticians' interests lie, for the chairman of the Association of Optical Practitioners stated on January 17 that if the supplementary service were to be discontinued 50% of the opticians in the British Isles would be put out of business without compensation. A policy of separate discussions on the fee question benefits no one except the Minister, who is able to play one interested party off against the other.

While the opticians are protected to some extent by their Whitley Council, they are evidently not too happy about the future, and would, I believe, respond favourably to an invitation from us to explore the advantages of a system of collective security. There is a long-standing (though happily obsolescent) prejudice against any sort of co-operation with ophthalmic opticians. But to-day, when private practice is, for the great majority of us, almost dead, an old feud should not be allowed to blind either side to the value of a united front against further arbitrary action by the State.—I am, etc.,

Birmingham.

J. H. AUSTIN.

TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP

The following is a list of local authorities which are understood to require employees to be members of a trade union or other organization:

County Council.—Durham.

Metropolitan Borough Councils.—Bethnal Green, Fulham, Hackney, Poplar, Southwark, Stoke Newington.

Non-County Borough Councils.—Crewe, Dartford.

Urban District Councils.—Denton, Droylsden, Houghton-le-Spring, Huyton-with-Roby.

Association Notices

Diary of Central Meetings

FEBRUARY

- 6 Tues. Health Centre Committee, 2 p.m.
- 6 Tues. Registrars' Group Executive Committee, 2 p.m.
- 7 Wed. Adjourned Council Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 8 Thurs. Nursing Subcommittee, 2 p.m.
- 8 Thurs. Whitley Committee B (at 1, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London, S.W.), 2.30 p.m.
- 9 Fri. Ophthalmic Group Committee, 2 p.m.
- 13 Tues. Meeting of Trustees, Dawson Williams Memorial Fund, 11 a.m.
- 14 Wed. Staff Side Whitley Committee C (at Ministry of Health, Whitehall, London, S.W.), 9.45 a.m.; Full Whitley Committee C (at 1, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London, S.W.), 12 noon.
- 14 Wed. Film Committee, 2 p.m.
- 15 Thurs. Central Consultants and Specialists Committee, 1.30 p.m.
- 15 Thurs. International Relations Committee (*date changed from February 1*), 2 p.m.
- 15 Thurs. Occupational Health Committee, 2 p.m.
- 16 Fri. Tuberculosis and Diseases of the Chest Group Committee, 2 p.m.
- 21 Wed. Private Practice Committee, 2 p.m.
- 28 Wed. General Practice Review Committee, 2 p.m.
- 28 Wed. Maritime Subcommittee, Private Practice Committee (*date changed from February 7*), 2 p.m.

Branch and Division Meetings to be Held

BOLTON DIVISION.—At Bolton Royal Infirmary, Tuesday, February 6, 8.30 p.m., lecture by Professor Ian Aird: "Experiences in a Tumour Clinic."

COVENTRY DIVISION.—Tuesday, February 6, programme of medical films.

GUILDFORD DIVISION.—At Royal Surrey County Hospital, Guildford, Thursday, February 8, 7.30 p.m., clinical meeting.

HAMPSTEAD DIVISION.—At New End Hospital, Hampstead, London, N.W., Wednesday, February 7, 8.30 p.m., talk by Dr. Geoffrey Evans: "The Physical Basis of Functional Disease." All medical practitioners in the area of the Division are invited.

NORTH OF ENGLAND BRANCH.—At New Lecture Theatre, Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Thursday, February 8, 7.15 p.m., clinical demonstration by Mr. F. McGuckin and staff of Ear, Nose, and Throat Department: "The Modern Approach to Otitis Media and Some Examples of Post-cricoid Carcinoma"; address by Mr. C. J. L. Thurgar: "Some Medical Aspects of Atomic Warfare."

NUNEATON AND TAMWORTH DIVISION.—At the Red Lion Hotel, Atherstone, Tuesday, February 6, 8.45 p.m., address by Dr. Stephen Tibbits: "The Coroner and the Doctor."

REIGATE DIVISION.—At Redhill County Hospital, Tuesday, February 6, 8.30 p.m., talk by Mr. A. Lawrence Abel: "Some Common Diseases of the Rectum and Anal Canal"; 9.30 p.m., colour film: "Abdomino-perineal Excision of the Rectum."

TUNBRIDGE WELLS DIVISION.—At Kent and Sussex Hospital, Saturday, February 10, and Sunday, February 11, week-end refresher course. (1) Lectures by Dr. R. A. Trevelthick: "Industrial First Aid" (with coloured film); Professor R. S. Pilcher: "Infections of the Hand" (with B.M.A. Film); Sir John Parkinson: "Angina Pectoris"; Dr. Geoffrey Todd: "The Problem of Tuberculosis." (2) Medical films. (3) Brains Trust—Professor R. S. Pilcher, Dr. R. A. Trevelthick, Sir John Parkinson, and Dr. Geoffrey Todd.

British Medical Guild Meetings to be Held

MARYLEBONE.—At Medical Society of London, 11, Chandos Street, London, W., Friday, February 9, 8.30 p.m., meeting of all medical practitioners in the area to discuss latest developments of the British Medical Guild; Dr. D. P. Stevenson (Deputy Secretary, B.M.A.) will answer questions.

Correction.—An incorrect reply was given in the *Supplement* of January 13 (p. 14) to a reader asking whether he would be liable for income tax on the profit he would make if he sold his post-war car. Our income-tax expert states that "Section 17 of the Income Tax Act, 1945, applies the balancing charge to the excess of the amount received from the sale of the car over the amount, if any, of the said expenditure still unallowed at the time of the event"—in common parlance, over the written-down value of the car."