

that if there was a successful appeal he thought the general damages should be £200 and the special £72 10s. Every surgeon knows how easily infection can track up a metal wire which pierces the tissues, and a major operation may well lower the general resistance to infection. The learned judge's finding seems by far the most likely explanation of the mishap.

Medical Notes in Parliament

The Divorce and Nullity of Marriage (Scotland) Bill was down for consideration in the House of Lords this week.

The business of the House of Commons included the second reading of the Housing (Financial Provisions) Bill and the National Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill, as well as later stages of the Blind Persons Bill and the Population Bill.

The report of the inquiry into the recent outbreak of typhoid fever at Croydon was issued to M.P.s on February 14 (see p. 404). No immediate request was made for a debate on it.

On February 15 there was issued a report by the Departmental Committee on questions arising out of the Workmen's Compensation Acts, making recommendations on the certification of miners' nystagmus, on the appointment and powers of medical referees, and on kindred matters. Appointment of medical appeal tribunals is recommended.

Progress of Slum Clearance

In the House of Commons on February 15 Sir KINGSLEY WOOD moved the second reading of the Housing (Financial Provisions) Bill, which, he said, provided for the furtherance of the work of slum clearance and of dealing with overcrowding. Special provision was also made for agricultural housing, and the exceptional conditions prevailing in small urban areas would also be met. The slum clearance programme covered about 400,000 houses. Some 800,000 persons had passed from slums to new and good housing conditions, and others would be dealt with at the rate, on an average, of 25,000 a month. It was estimated that for the execution of the present programme of slum clearance and for dealing with overcrowding on the present standard some 600,000 new houses were required—400,000 for slum clearance and 200,000 for the abatement of overcrowding. About 200,000 houses had been built to date towards that total, and another 70,000 houses were under construction, while houses were being completed at the rate of about 7,000 a month.

Under the Bill, houses completed not later than December 31, 1938, would rank for subsidies fixed by the Acts of 1930 and 1935. Those finished after that date would rank for subsidies fixed by the present Bill. It was provided that a further review of the position should be made after December 31, 1941. Two important changes were contained in the new financial provisions. The first was the fixing of the two subsidies for slum clearance and overcrowding at the same level, and the second was that there would be an annual contribution for each house built over a period of forty years. The uniform subsidy, so far as slum clearance was concerned, would allow local authorities to let houses at practically the same rents as were contemplated when the slum clearance subsidy was fixed in 1930. With regard to rural housing, the Government proposed to introduce legislation at an early date to extend for four years the Housing (Rural Workers) Act, which would expire in June.

A motion for the rejection of the Bill, moved by Mr. Greenwood, was defeated, and the Bill read the second time.

Mr. ELLIOT, replying to Mr. Henderson Stewart and Mr. Westwood on February 15, said he intended to submit to Parliament a draft order designed to continue the existing rates of subsidy under the Housing (Scotland) Acts of 1930 and 1935.

Medical Aid in China

On February 14 Mr. EDEN informed Mr. Mathers that an English-speaking group appointed under the League of Nations' plan of anti-epidemic assistance to China had been constituted under the leadership of Dr. R. C. Robertson and was already in China.

Pasteurized Milk: Reports of Milk Nutrition Committee

Mr. W. S. MORRISON, replying to Captain A. Evans on February 14, said that the Milk Nutrition Committee had published a report dealing with experiments on rats at the National Institute for Research in Dairying, Reading, and at the Rowett Institute, Aberdeen. Two further reports, dealing respectively with the work at these two institutions on the feeding of calves on raw and pasteurized milk, and with an investigation into the effect of dietary supplements of raw and pasteurized milk on the growth and health of school children, were in preparation and would be published shortly. The committee proposed to issue thereafter a final report dealing with their inquiries as a whole.

Derating of Hospitals.—Sir COOPER RAWSON asked, on February 10, whether the Government would introduce legislation to effect the derating of hospitals in view of the heavy burdens consequent on rebuilding and reassessment. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD regretted it was not possible to do this. Proposals of this kind had been considered on many occasions and strong objections to their adoption had been found.

Silicosis Scheme: Claim by Sheffield Widow.—Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER asked on February 10 that the Home Secretary should further consider the claim of a Sheffield widow, under the Silicosis Scheme, in respect of the death of her husband. He said her claim had been rejected in spite of the fact that this man had previously been awarded compensation for silicosis at the full rate for a period of five years upon a certificate of total disablement due to this disease, and that, after a post-mortem examination, the coroner certified that death was primarily due to silicosis. Sir SAMUEL HOARE said there were two examinations in this case, and that the final authority, the Silicosis Medical Board, came to the decision, after a post-mortem examination, that death was caused by independent conditions and not by silicosis. The Board had unique experience in diagnosis of silicosis, and its decision was authoritative. The Board had always been regarded as a final authority and he did not see what other authority one could have. Mr. ALEXANDER said there should be a right of appeal from the decision of the Board, and Mr. JAMES GRIFFITH remarked that the Medical Board was compelled to find silicosis as the primary cause of death, although in many cases it was a subsidiary one. Sir SAMUEL HOARE promised to look into the points raised, though he had no reason to believe that the Board was not an effective tribunal.

Medical History of ex-Service Men.—On February 14 Mr. ORR-EWING asked the Minister of Pensions whether in future the full medical history of an ex-Service man while in any of the Services could be supplied to his medical adviser if such a man made a written request to this effect. Mr. H. RAMSBOTHAM replied that the Service records were confidential. He could not, therefore, adopt the suggestion. It was, however, the practice of the Ministry to welcome any reasoned statement in support of the claim from the man's own medical adviser, and to give him an opportunity to discuss the case with a medical officer of the Ministry in his area.

Notes in Brief

The report of the Committee on Miners' Nystagmus has been presented to Parliament. Sir Samuel Hoare stated on February 3 that it would be issued shortly.

No special investigation has been made or is contemplated by the Ministry of Health into the nutritive value of margarine that has or has not been vitaminized. The Advisory Committee on Nutrition has recommended that where margarine is used it should be vitaminized. This recommendation has been conveyed to local authorities.