

The description "failed social experiment" as applied to the Workmen's Compensation Act, as it has operated in practice up to the present time, is a quotation; and I am certainly not alone in so regarding it, judging by the amount that has been said and written on the subject.

I retract nothing of what I have said on certification. But Dr. Dain misinterprets my remarks into a general charge of dishonesty, disregarding the more subtle mechanisms of motivation. I maintain that doctors should not be put in the invidious position of having to give or withhold from their own clients certificates upon which the receipt of benefits from society depends. From inquiries I am satisfied that many practitioners would be glad to be relieved of this. An acquaintance in general practice has recently told me that the majority of those attending at his surgery nowadays call only to obtain some kind of war certificate, many being complete strangers to him. As a rule he issues the certificate demanded without undue hesitation, satisfying his mind with the thought that the Ministry of — will not take much notice of it and also by refusing to accept a fee. In support of my thesis is the fact that the Ministry of Labour in consultation with the Ministry of Health has found it necessary to establish a system of independent medical referees to decide the merits of applications on medical grounds for release from scheduled employment or from taking up employment under direction in any case where a medical certificate submitted by the worker does not make it clear beyond all doubt that he is suffering from a specific illness or disability that clearly renders him unfit. Of course, frank dishonesty does occasionally come to light. Recently a hospital outpatient told me that he had had "six weeks' holiday on the panel" while admittedly in good health. Dr. Dain thinks that a satisfactory compromise is arrived at by there being several persons who return to work before they are really well for every one who would extend his period of incapacity improperly—i.e., two wrongs make a right. Surely we should aim at two "rights," even if it costs the public more. I am concerned with principle and not with cost; and the suggestion that the National Health Insurance scheme might become bankrupt if each sick person drawing benefit took one extra day of his benefit, though hard to credit, is irrelevant. Social service contributions are based on claims experience, and social service schemes are not in danger of being allowed to go bankrupt.—I am, etc.,

London, W.1.

B. BUCKLEY SHARP.

SIR,—Dr. Buckley Sharp (*Supplement*, Dec. 26, p. 79) describes an uncritical readiness to issue certificates as one of the attributes most likely to lead to prosperity. Dr. H. Guy Dain (*Supplement*, Jan. 2, p. 4) asserts that this is not true. May one ask Dr. Dain for a plain "yes" or "no" in answer to this question: All other things—competence, sympathy, and so on—being equal, is the doctor who is uncritically ready to issue certificates likely to prosper more than his colleague whose issue of certificates is rigidly guided by his knowledge that such certificates are cheques drawn upon other people's money?—I am, etc.,

DONALD M. O'CONNOR.

Brenchley, Kent.

Scheme for Diagnostic and Key Hospitals

SIR,—May I support the broad principles in the article on this subject (*Supplement*, Jan. 2, p. 2), and confirm their real practicability as in the example quoted. Personally, after some years in a London practice, where one's knowledge and skill were slowly diminishing from lack of facilities to join in hospital work, it was refreshing to find here such facilities, and the chance of adding to one's ability through them. Bureaucratic medicine and surgery appear today to aim at taking away from the G.P. more and more of the things which he "qualified" to do: to take them away not because he cannot do them properly, given facilities, but simply in order to give more work to "specialists." Such bureaucracy forgets that the higher the practical skill of the G.P. on the average, the better will be the health and happiness of the community.—I am, etc.,

Hayle.

W. H. PALMER.

POSTGRADUATE NEWS

The Fellowship of Medicine announces: Week-end course in rheumatism at Rheumatic Unit, St. Stephen's Hospital (L.C.C.), on Sat. and Sun., Feb. 27 and 28; revision course in anaesthetics, April 5 to 17, lectures daily at Royal Cancer Hospital, and practical demonstrations at various London hospitals.

WEEKLY POSTGRADUATE DIARY

BRITISH POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL, Duane Road, W.—*Daily*, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Medical Clinics, Surgical Clinics and Operations, Obstetrics and Gynaecological Clinics and Operations. *Daily*, 1.30 p.m. Post-mortems. *Mon.*, War Course on Special Problems in War Surgery begins; 2 p.m., Ear, Nose, and Throat Clinic. *Tues.*, 10 a.m., Paediatric Clinic; 11 a.m., Gynaecological Clinic; 2 p.m., Genito-urinary Clinic. *Wed.*, 11.30 a.m., Medical Conference. *Thurs.*, 2 p.m., Dermatological Clinic; 2.15 p.m., X-ray Demonstration on the Duodenum and Small Intestine by Dr. E. J. E. Topham. *Fri.*, 12.15 p.m., Surgical Conference; 2 p.m., Gynaecological Conference; 2 p.m., Sterility Clinic.

FELLOWSHIP OF MEDICINE, 1, Wimpole Street, W.—*London Homeopathic Hospital*: *Wed.* afternoon (limited to 6), Clinical Surgery Demonstration. *National Heart Hospital*: *Tues.* and *Wed.*, 10 a.m., Out-patient clinics.

DIARY OF SOCIETIES & LECTURES

ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE.—*Tues.*, 4 p.m. General Meeting of Fellows. *Thurs.*, 2 p.m. Section of Dermatology. *Fri.*, 2.30 p.m. Section of Disease in Children; 2.30 p.m. Section of Epidemiology and State Medicine. *Sat.* (Jan. 23), 10 a.m., Section of Neurology, at National Hospital, Queen Square, W.C.

MEDICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, 11, Chandos Street, W.—*Mon.*, 4 p.m. Discussion: Defective Nutritional Deficiencies during Pregnancy and Lactation and the Influence on the Mother and Child, to be introduced by Prof. James Young and Dr. T. Izod Bennett.

B.M.A.: Diary of Central Meetings

FEBRUARY

3. *Wed. Council*, 10 a.m. (*change of date*).

B.M.A.: Branch and Division Meetings to be Held

PERTH BRANCH.—At Perth Royal Infirmary, *Thurs.*, Jan. 21, 8.30 p.m. Dr. W. D. Chambers: Psychopathic States.

Corrigendum.—In the summary of the views of constituent bodies on the report of the Medical Planning Commission in the *Supplement* of Jan. 2 the words "Royal College of Physicians" in the last line of column 1 should read "Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists." It was the latter body which called for a limitation of panel lists.

MEDICAL WAR RELIEF FUND

FORTY-FIRST LIST

Amount previously acknowledged, £47,711 2s. 9d. and £100 3¼% Conversion Stock and £40 3% Defence Bonds

Individual Subscriptions

£10 10s.—Mr. J. Bastow, Bath.
£5 5s.—Mr. A. R. Brinsden, St. Albans.
£2 2s.—Surg. Lieut. A. L. Lankester, R.N.V.R.; Col. W. O'S. Murphy, I.M.S. (ret.) (2nd donation); Dr. R. Willcocks, Chelmsford (2nd donation); Dr. G. R. Wilson, Ongar (2nd donation).
£1 1s.—Major W. Happer, I.M.S., and Mrs. Happer (15th donation); Dr. G. A. Quinnell, Milborne Port.
£1.—Lieut. G. D. Denlow, R.A.M.C. (2nd donation).
£38 16s.—Lincoln Division—per Mr. G. A. Bagot Walters (amount already sent £288 15s.); Drs. T. W. and P. Chapman, £10 10s. (2nd donation); Dr. D. F. Menzies, £5 5s.; Dr. E. W. Woodbridge, £1 (2nd donation); Dr. A. S. Green, £2 2s. (2nd donation); Dr. K. M. Monteith, £1 1s.; Mr. J. A. Hadley, £3 3s. (2nd donation); Dr. L. T. Dean, £5 5s. (2nd donation); Dr. W. P. Roe, £2 2s. (2nd donation); Dr. B. Sweeten, £2 2s.; Dr. F. G. Ashton, £1 1s.; Dr. J. C. Gray, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. F. W. Shegog, £2 2s. (2nd donation); Dr. A. Picken, £2 2s. (2nd donation).
£33.—North Northumberland Division—per Dr. D. T. McDonald (amount already sent £57 9s. 9d.); Dr. V. E. Badcock, £3 3s. (2nd donation); Dr. R. S. Smart, £1 1s.; Dr. H. F. Park, 10s. (2nd donation); Dr. A. N. Bousfield, £2 2s. (2nd donation); Dr. Scott Purves, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. F. B. Macaskie, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. T. G. Wilson, £1 1s.; Dr. A. M. Reid, £1 1s.; Dr. I. A. H. Jaboor, £1; Dr. J. A. Macleod, £1 1s.; Dr. J. A. Small, £5 5s. (2nd donation); Dr. D. T. McDonald, £3 3s. (3rd donation); Dr. Jas. McDonald, £3 3s. (2nd donation); Dr. W. M. P. McDonald, £3 3s. (2nd donation); Dr. P. W. MacLagan, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Col. H. M. Morton, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. J. C. D. Mitchell, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. W. G. Scott, £2 2s. (2nd donation).
£27 14s. 9d. (£124.00).—Canadian Medical Association (amount already sent, £1,406 4s. 1d.): Saskatchewan Division.
£10 10s.—Leyton Medical Board No. 1—per Dr. W. M. Fairlie (amount already sent £100); Dr. S. N. Forbes, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. R. Spears, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. J. S. Dayer, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. L. W. Batten, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. W. Dobbin, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. D. J. Cochrane, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. J. F. Broughton, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. P. Mitchell, £1 1s. (2nd donation); Dr. W. M. Fairlie, £2 2s. (2nd donation).
£5.—Medical Society of Plymouth—per Mr. Elliot Square (amount already sent, £5).
£1 1s.—Perth Branch—per Dr. D. B. Low (Dr. C. A. Herron).

Local Medical and Panel Committees

£32 4s. 6d.—Midlothian (9th donation).
£29 11s. 7d.—Clackmannan (5th donation).
£20 7s. 6d.—Dumbarton County (8th donation).
Total—£47,936 13s. and £100 3¼% Conversion Stock and £40 3% Defence Bonds

Cheques, payable to the Medical War Relief Fund, should be sent to Dr. G. C. Anderson, Honorary Treasurer of the Fund, British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, & DEATHS

The charge for inserting announcements under this head is 10s. 6d. This amount should be forwarded with the notice, authenticated with the name and address of the sender, and should reach the Advertisement Manager not later than first post Monday morning to ensure insertion in the current issue.

BIRTHS

MACKENZIE CROOKS.—On Jan. 4, 1943, to Gwy, wife of W/C L. Mackenzie Crooks, a brother for Elizabeth and David, at Red House, Wendover.
MILLIGAN.—On Jan. 6, 1943, at Addington Hall, Cheshire, to Margaret (née Ellis), wife of Capt. A. B. Milligan, R.A.M.C. (over-seas), a son.
MONTGOMERIE.—On Dec. 13, 1942, at Bow Bells, Bawbrook, Shrewsbury, to Nora, wife of Major James Montgomerie, R.A.M.C., over-seas, the gift of a sister for Jamie.
PAGE.—On Jan. 2, at Dunstall House Nursing Home, N.W.3, to Margaret (née Moore White), wife of Lieutenant L. G. M. Page, R.A.M.C., a son.
THOMPSON.—On Jan. 5, 1943, to Dorothy, wife of Brian Connor Thompson, M.D., of 7, Marchwood Crescent, W.5, a daughter.
TOMKINSON.—On Dec. 20, 1942, at Dorset House, Cheslyn Hay, Staffs, to Dr. Agnes Tomkinson (née Sutherland), wife of Dr. O. W. R. Tomkinson, a daughter.