

to keep the benefits which had already arisen from that policy. It accepted the necessity for continuance of the Ministry of Food. Bread was not the only food to which the Ministry of Food had added advantageous materials: margarine had been greatly improved. He hoped the country would become accustomed to regard the existence of a Ministry of Food, performing these and other functions, as an essential part of our national economy.

He accepted the suggestion that the Government should publish the report of the conference on the post-war loaf. When that was done the discussion could be conducted on a higher level because it had hitherto been encumbered by guesswork. He noticed from the report that riboflavin was decidedly less in quantity in the 80% extraction than in the higher extraction. That was not of itself an objection to the 80% flour, because riboflavin was normally taken in other foods. He was authorized by the Minister of Food to say that he would give every help in furthering the researches which the conference recommended. The conference had unanimously suggested that in the meantime the present national flour should be maintained with the improvements brought about by the latest improved methods of milling. The Government proposed to accept that recommendation.

Lord TEVIOT said that in the last few years many of the old-fashioned stone-grinding mills had applied for licences to start again, but only a very small number had been granted. There should be an opportunity for restarting these mills.

PUBLIC PREFERENCE ?

Lord GLENTANAR said he was assured by an expert that the extraction to-day was no higher than 78%. He suggested that millers and bakers should have every opportunity to supply wholemeal bread and that white flour should be provided in small quantities for special purposes, but rationed if necessary. Lord LLEWELLIN, speaking of the work done on the extraction rate of flour by the Cereals Research Station at St. Albans, said investigation there had proved that vitamin B₁ and most of the others were highly concentrated in part of the wheat germ, and that this fraction of the wheat could be segregated during milling to ensure that the great part of it went into the flour. When the extraction rate was reduced to 82½% there was a technical process in the mills to ensure that the necessary part of the germ reached the flour and did not go into the offal. It was no good towards the end of a war holding on too long to a kind of bread which the people did not like; a lot of manual workers were not enamoured of high-extraction flour. According to reports made to him when he was Minister of Food there had been an appreciable falling off in nutritional value when an 80% extraction was introduced, taking into account that other things besides bread were provided. Undoubtedly the 80% flour kept better, and the Royal Navy had insisted throughout the war on white flour for every ship commissioned for sea service. With the 85% extraction flour there had been a waste of bread.

Lord BLEDISLOE said he lived among miners and wondered whether the difficulties in securing adequate output of coal were not to some extent due to the fact that the miners preferred white bread and lean bacon. He affirmed that since the last debate on the subject in the House there had been no authoritative medical testimony in favour of a white loaf bereft of its protein, its fat, its iron, its calcium, and its vitamin B. It was the more necessary that bread should not be robbed because the present supply of whole milk was inadequate and would remain so for a considerable time.

The House agreed to Lord Hankey's motion.

Shortage of Nurses

On Oct. 25 Mr. BEVAN announced that according to returns submitted to Mr. Isaacs there were on June 30, 1945, vacancies for about 30,000 nurses of all grades in hospitals and allied institutions, including nursing homes, in Great Britain. He added that he was consulting the Minister of Labour and the organizations principally concerned on the whole nursing position and hoped to make a full statement in two or three weeks. Arrangements were being made whereby women who are willing and suitable to be trained for the nursing profession might be released from the Forces in Class B.

Earl WINTERTON asked the Minister of Health to reconsider the regulation whereby former V.A.D.s and auxiliary nurses wishing to qualify as State-registered nurses would be exempted only from six months of their four years' training. Mr. BEVAN replied that this was primarily a matter for the General Nursing Council, who decided after full consideration and discussion that the remission to be allowed in suitable cases should not exceed six months, thus reducing the minimum period of training from three to two and a half years. He had agreed to approve a rule to that effect.

Food of Diabetic and Tuberculous Persons.—Sir BEN SMITH said on Oct. 10 that he was advised that the present allowances of foodstuffs for diabetic and tuberculous patients were adequate for their needs. He could only allow them extra eggs at the expense of other members of the community, some of whom suffered from complaints for which eggs were a necessity. During the present general shortage of foodstuffs he could not provide diabetic and tuberculous patients with extra eggs prescribed for them by their own doctor.

Health Insurance Benefit.—On Oct. 11 Mr. BEECHMAN asked the Minister of National Insurance whether, in view of the delay before the passing into law of a comprehensive scheme of national insurance, he would forthwith introduce measures to bring the rate of sickness benefit into conformity with unemployment and other benefits, and extend to all cases of sickness provision for dependants. Mr. JAMES GRIFFITHS said that partial legislation on this matter in advance of the main insurance measure would be unsatisfactory. The Government intended so to frame the main legislation that the earliest practicable opportunity could be taken of bringing into effect, as part of a general plan, improvements in rates and conditions of health insurance benefit.

Mortality from Infectious Diseases.—Mr. BEVAN has furnished the following table for England and Wales:

Death Rates per Million living under the Age of 15 Years

Cause	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944*
Scarlet fever ..	12	11	9	11	9
Diphtheria ..	266	280	192	134	92
Whooping-cough ..	78	279	94	129	121
Measles ..	95	128	53	86	28

* Rates for 1944 are provisional.

Notes in Brief

The possibility of treating Service tuberculosis patients in Service hospitals or Service wings of civilian sanatoria is being examined with a view to minimizing any delay between diagnosis and the institution of appropriate treatment.

In the British zone in Germany the minimum food value of all displaced persons is 2,000 calories per person per day.

The Ministry of Supply is the wartime production authority for x-ray equipment and accessories. The post-war position is under consideration, and no consultations with the industry have yet taken place.

Dr. Summerskill, in reply to a question to the Minister of Food, said on Oct. 18 that existing arrangements for supplying dried bananas to patients with coeliac disease should not cause difficulty or delay.

Correction.—The statement on release of students in Medical Notes in Parliament (Oct. 27, p. 589) contains a misprint; students eligible for release in Class B are those in groups 1-49, and not 1-19 as stated.

Medical News

The Council of the Royal Society of Medicine proposes to create a Section of Endocrinology. The 50th anniversary of the discovery of x rays will be celebrated by the Section of Radiology at a meeting on Thursday, Nov. 8, at 4.30 p.m., under the chairmanship of Lord Horder, and, at 8 p.m., there will be a reception and entertainment.

Dr. J. M. Alston, pathologist to the Archway Group Laboratory (L.C.C.), will lecture on the scope of penicillin therapy to the Association of Austrian Doctors in Great Britain on Nov. 8 at 6 p.m., at 69, Greencroft Gardens, N.W.6 (near Finchley Road Station). Guests will be welcome.

The Food Education Society (29, Gordon Square, W.C.) has arranged a public lecture on "Food and Behaviour," to be given by Dr. E. A. Hamilton Pearson at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, Gower Street, W.C., on Thursday, Nov. 15, at 3 p.m.

A meeting of the Tuberculosis Association will be held at 26, Portland Place, W., on Friday, Nov. 16. Papers will be read, at 4.45 p.m., by Prof. G. Selby Wilson on "Bovine Infection and Disease" and, at 5.50 p.m., by Dr. Kalman Mann on "Incidence of Primary and Haematogenous Lung Lesions in Skeletal Tuberculosis." At 8 p.m. there will be a discussion on "Prognosis and Treatment of Combined Tuberculosis," to be opened by Dr. Harley Stevens, Mr. G. R. Girdlestone, and Dr. F. S. Hawkins.

A meeting of the Society of Public Analysts and Other Analytical Chemists will be held at the Chemical Society's rooms (Burlington House, Piccadilly, W.) on Wednesday, Nov. 7, at 6 p.m., when the following papers will be presented and discussed: "The Determination of Carotene and Vitamin A in Butter and Margarine," by Mr. T. W. Goodwin and Prof. R. A. Morton, and "A Photoelectric Method of Assaying Vitamin A in Margarine," by Messrs. J. L. Bowen, N. T. Grigeman, and G. F. Longman.

Dr. John Scott Clark has been released from internment in Japanese hands.