

Obituary

R. J. McCONNELL, M.Ch.

Mr. R. J. McConnell, consulting surgeon to the Royal Victoria Hospital and to the Ulster Hospital for Women and Children, Belfast, died at his home at Belfast on July 22. By his death the Belfast Medical School has lost one of its best-known and most popular consultants. He was 72 years of age.

Owing to the early death of both his parents, Robert John McConnell was brought up with the family of his uncle, Mr. (later, Sir) Thomas McConnell, and was educated at Bedford Grammar School and Queen's University, Belfast. After graduating M.B., B.Ch. in 1912, he became demonstrator in anatomy under Professor Johnson Symington and passed the primary examination for the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England at the first attempt. While he was working in the anatomy department he made a special study of the gall-bladder and bile ducts and read a paper on the subject at the meeting of the British Anatomical Society in Glasgow.

The first world war interrupted McConnell's studies, and with his friends, S. R. Foster and Harry Malcolm, he joined the R.A.M.C. and served in France with the 59th North Midland Territorial Division. In 1916 he was invalided home with trench fever and was sent as a patient to the Ulster Volunteer Force Hospital, Belfast, and on discharge from the hospital became its house-surgeon for the later years of the war. But he never completely overcame the war legacy of illness. After demobilization he returned to the serious study of surgery and by obtaining the degree of M.Ch., with distinction, qualified himself for a hospital appointment in Northern Ireland. A period of service as clinical assistant in the Ulster and the Royal Victoria hospitals was soon followed by appointments to the surgical staffs of both these hospitals, and to both of them he gave faithful service till the age of retirement. A member of the British Medical Association for nearly forty years, he served as a vice-president of the Section of Orthopaedics, Including Treatment of Fractures, when the Association held its Annual Meeting at Belfast in 1937.

Mr. S. T. IRWIN writes: R. J. McConnell began his consultant work at a time when it was still considered respectable to be a general surgeon, and so, although perhaps he paid most attention to the abdomen, he had a wide acquaintance with the surgery of the other regions. When the British Orthopaedic Association met in Belfast in 1927 he made a considerable contribution to the meeting on the subject of club foot. In both his hospital appointments he gave much time to teaching and his classes soon became popular, especially with final-year students. He was at his best with a small class around the bed or when discussing a case with his assistants over a cup of tea. He disliked large audiences and could rarely be persuaded to speak at public meetings. This reticence prevented him from accepting the presidency of several medical societies which he was offered, and he refused to become chairman of staff in either of his hospitals. He had a wide and accurate knowledge of surgical literature. His retentive memory, coupled with his dexterity and power of anticipation, made him an invaluable surgical assistant in his earlier years. No apology need be made for recording his gallantry in the devastating air raid of May 4, 1941. On that particular night he was on duty at the Ulster Hospital when it was almost completely demolished by explosive and incendiary bombs. He

worked with the casualties throughout the night in the midst of fires and falling masonry, and in the morning drove members of the nursing staff to the homes of friends through streets littered with debris. He received an official commendation for his brave conduct. He was most at home in his own unit in the Royal Victoria Hospital. This unit was perhaps the happiest and certainly the most attractive to resident pupils, house-surgeons, and nurses, to whom he showed the greatest consideration at all times. He was adored by all his patients, whether they were children in the Ulster Hospital or adults in the Royal. To him the interest of the patient was always of prime importance. In his student days and for some years after he was a keen sportsman. He rode in point-to-point races, played golf and Rugby football. But when he gave these up he adopted photography as his hobby, an art in which he made himself an expert. When cine-films in colour were introduced he became interested in this aspect of photography, and had a very considerable collection. These included weddings in the families of his friends, operations, and foreign scenes, but perhaps his best-known film was an amusing skit on the Smith-Petersen operation. This was indeed a masterpiece, and has been widely shown to visiting medical societies in Belfast. Apart from his professional work, perhaps his greatest interest was in reading. He was a voracious reader, and his nightlight was rarely extinguished before 2 a.m. He had an extensive library, mainly historical and biographical, and almost to the end of his days he remained the student. It would be true to say that for a period of 30 years no member of the Belfast Medical School enjoyed to a greater extent than "Bobby John," as he was known to colleagues and students alike, the confidence of the general practitioners of the province or was more beloved by successive generations of medical students.

DORIS GORDON, M.B.E., M.B., F.R.C.S.Ed., D.P.H.

Dr. Doris Gordon, who did much to stimulate public opinion on the progress of obstetrics, particularly in New Zealand, died recently at Stratford, Taranaki, New Zealand. She was 65 years of age.

Doris Clifton Jolly, the daughter of Mr. Alfred Jolly, general manager of the National Bank of New Zealand, was born in Victoria, Australia, but went to New Zealand with her family in 1894. She was educated at Otago University, graduating M.B., Ch.B. from the University of New Zealand in 1916. Later she obtained the D.P.H. After graduation she held an appointment on the medical staff of Dunedin Hospital, and was lecturer in bacteriology in 1916-17. In the latter year she married Dr. W. P. P. Gordon, and in 1918 they set up in practice at Stratford.

Dr. Doris Gordon devoted the whole of her professional life to the problems of maternity and child welfare. The arguments she used in a thesis written in 1924 helped to form the basis of the New Zealand Government's maternity service scheme. Under the scheme every primigravida became entitled to a fortnight in hospital free of charge, together with the best available medical attention and the use of analgesia in childbirth. She was always a staunch advocate of the use of chloroform, about which she had many differences of opinion with her professional colleagues, including the late Sir Truby King. She was director of the Maternal and Infant Welfare Health Department in New Zealand from 1946 to 1948.

In 1925 Dr. Gordon became the first woman from Australasia to obtain a Fellowship in any Royal College. In that year she was elected F.R.C.S.Ed., her husband being admitted to the Fellowship also at the same ceremony. When the British (now Royal) College of

Obstetricians and Gynaecologists was founded in 1929 she was elected a founder Member, becoming a Fellow in 1937. On the occasion of the silver jubilee celebrations of the College in 1954 she was awarded honorary Fellowship in recognition of her distinguished services to obstetrics and gynaecology in her own country, and in particular for being instrumental in obtaining funds for the endowment of a chair at Dunedin. She organized an appeal in 1930 which produced over £30,000. She was also responsible for the foundation in 1927 of the New Zealand Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society. She was appointed M.B.E. in 1935. Her autobiography, *Backblocks Baby Doctor*, was published last year. Dr. Gordon is survived by her husband and the three sons and one daughter of the marriage.

W. POINTON DICK, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

The obituary of Dr. W. Pointon Dick was printed in the *Journal* of August 4 (p. 305).

Dr. A. J. HAWE writes from Kumasi, Gold Coast: W. Pointon Dick's decision in 1952 to accept the post of tuberculosis specialist in the Gold Coast was probably influenced by the knowledge that his father, Dr. W. B. Dick, had practised medicine there some decades earlier. Pointon Dick found the disease to be widespread and dreaded by patients and relatives alike. The condition had earned such an evil reputation that fear and often panic followed its diagnosis. He was the best possible choice for the task of combating tuberculosis in the Gold Coast and threw himself into the work with great energy. By establishing treatment centres and using mass radiography and tuberculin surveys he was able to bring help to those areas where it was most needed. The work was very strenuous and demanded great physical exertion and much travelling. His friendly attitude and kindness to his patients soon won him popularity, and his success in the treatment of patients—often with advanced disease—established his reputation and raised the morale of the population. It is largely due to his work that patients in the Gold Coast no longer regard the diagnosis of tuberculosis as tantamount to a sentence of death. His passing will be mourned all over the extensive territories where he laboured so hard. It is pleasing to know that the Prime Minister of the Gold Coast has requested that the tuberculosis wards in the Gold Coast Hospital shall be named "The Pointon Dick Memorial Wards," and so help to perpetuate his name.

Dr. D. F. WHITAKER died suddenly at his home at Guildford on August 1 at the age of 56. Donald Faraday Whitaker was born on July 17, 1900, the son of the late Sir James Smith Whitaker, the first Medical Secretary of the British Medical Association. Receiving his medical education at University College Hospital, he qualified M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. in 1926, and then held the appointments of house-surgeon at Hampstead General Hospital and house-physician at the Seamen's Hospital, Greenwich, before he settled in general practice at Guildford early in 1929. For a time he was also assistant anaesthetist to the Royal Surrey County Hospital, and later became out-patients medical officer to the physiotherapy department of the hospital. In his home life as a youth Dr. Whitaker must have heard many references to the British Medical Association, of which his father was Medical Secretary from 1902 to 1912. A member of the Association since 1930, he came to prominence in the affairs of the B.M.A., both centrally and locally, immediately before the outbreak of the second world war. He was honorary secretary of the Guildford Division from 1938 to 1944; its representative at the Annual Representative Meeting on several occasions from 1938 to 1954; and its chairman in 1951-2. It was perhaps appropriate that in 1953 Dr. Whitaker should become a member of the Constitu-

tion Committee of the Association, which was set up in that year to review the Association's constitution, because his father was a member of the Constitution Committee appointed by the B.M.A. in 1900, the establishment of Divisions within the Branches of the B.M.A. being among the recommendations of that committee. Dr. Whitaker also served on a number of other B.M.A. committees, including the General Medical Services Committee, the Joint Formulary Committee, the Central Ethical Committee, and the Protection of Practices Committee. During the second world war he acted as emergency officer for Guildford and was honorary secretary of the local medical war committee. Since the introduction of the National Health Service he had served on the Surrey Executive Council and on the Surrey Local Medical Committee, of which he had been chairman since 1953, having become vice-chairman in 1951.

Dr. NOEL E. WATERFIELD writes: The news of the sudden death of Donald Whitaker from coronary thrombosis has been received by his colleagues with profound sorrow and regret. For many years while engaged in a very busy practice he gave up a considerable part of his leisure time to the service of his colleagues in the profession. We in Surrey have particular grounds for gratitude for his work as chairman of the Surrey Local Medical Committee. He filled this post with conspicuous success, and by his wise interventions kept members to the point, soothed ruffled tempers, and helped the committee to arrive at wise decisions. His presence on the Surrey Executive Council and its many committees, where he was equally respected, did much to maintain friendly relations between the practitioners in Surrey and the council. Many of us have lost a good friend and the profession generally a wise counsellor.

Dr. M. K. JOHNSTON died in Yardley Green Hospital, Birmingham, on July 19 at the age of 53. Munro Kennedy Johnston was born on September 18, 1902, the third of four sons of the Rev. William Johnston, of Troon, Ayrshire. After graduating M.B., Ch.B. from Glasgow University in 1930, he began his career as a psychiatrist at Stoneyetts Mental Hospital, Glasgow. He then held an appointment at the Mansfield and District Hospital from 1931 to 1933. In 1935 he became medical officer at Brookwood Hospital, in Surrey, where later he was promoted to deputy medical superintendent. He obtained the D.P.M. of the English Royal Colleges in 1936. Joining the R.A.M.C. in 1939, he served throughout the second world war until 1945, attaining the rank of major, and for some time was in charge of Rudolf Hess, from whom he elicited valuable information about the German war effort. After the war he was appointed consulting psychiatrist to the Staffordshire County Council, but in 1947 he contracted pulmonary tuberculosis, from which he died after a prolonged illness. Dr. Johnston's friendliness and modesty and his keen sense of humour made him a charming companion. He is survived by his widow and three daughters. One of his brothers is Dr. Lennox Johnston, of Wallasey.

Dr. T. B. COSTELLO, one of the oldest medical practitioners in Ireland, died at Tuam, Co. Galway, on July 14 at the age of 92. Thomas Bodkin Costello was born at Tuam in January, 1864. After leaving the local school of the Christian Brothers, he was apprenticed to his uncle, Dr. Nicholas Mahon, of Galway, and later studied medicine at the former Queen's College, Galway, and the Carmichael Medical School, Dublin. He graduated M.D. from the old Royal University of Ireland in 1888, and took the D.P.H. of the Irish Royal Colleges in 1906. Shortly after graduation he became dispensary medical officer on the island of Lettermore, Co. Galway, where he was the only doctor for many miles around. With no qualified nurses or midwives to help him and with the nearest hospital and dentist both 40 miles away, his early life as a doctor called for physical strength and endurance almost as much as it did for professional skill. His area included a number of islands off the coast of Galway, and to reach them he used a currach, in all weathers. He left Lettermore to

return to Tuam, where he remained until his death. There he held a number of appointments, including those of medical officer of health to one of the dispensary districts and to the rural district council, and he was medical adviser to the police, the Post Office, and the local schools. He did much good work as a Red Cross Society lecturer, and was the first medical officer to the Tuam unit of the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps. A member of the British Medical Association for 66 years, he was president of the old Connaught Branch in 1922 and again in 1924-5. He also served on the Irish Committee from 1923 to 1934. Archaeology was among his outside interests, and his contributions to the knowledge of the subject gained him a widespread reputation. He was president of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society, a vice-president of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. In 1903 he compiled a list of medical terms in Irish. His death is a great loss both to the medical profession in Eire and to his many friends and patients. He was ever ready to help a young and struggling doctor to make headway in his career, and his patients knew they could rely on him to respond to a call for help at any time of the day or night. To the sick he brought a cheery optimism which in itself did much to encourage the patient on the road to recovery. Among the older generation of medical practitioners he came to be regarded as an adviser to be consulted. His advice, when given, was invariably sound; his reward, still another friend. Dr. Costello lived long and happily, and there are many in all walks of life in Tuam and beyond who will mourn his passing. He is survived by his widow, formerly Miss Edith Drury, whom he married in 1903, and one daughter.

Medical Notes in Parliament

Doctors' Annual Earnings

Dr. A. D. D. BROUGHTON (Batley and Morley, Lab.) asked the Minister of Health on August 1 what was the average annual payment to individual general medical practitioners in the National Health Service in each of the four years 1952 to 1955. Mr. R. TURTON stated that the average gross annual earnings of individual general medical practitioners in Great Britain providing unrestricted general medical services were as follows:

Year Ended	Average Gross Earnings		
March 31, 1952	£2,239
March 31, 1953	£3,216
March 31, 1954	£3,219
March 31, 1955	£3,121

A further sum would be payable in respect of the year ended March 31, 1955, when the amount of the practice expenses and of the earnings from non-National Health Service sources for that year had been ascertained.

Artificial Eyes

Mr. JOHN HOWARD (Southampton, Test, Con.) asked the Minister of Health on August 1 if he would make a statement concerning the fitting of artificial eyes under the Health Service in order to clarify the position. Mr. TURTON replied that artificial eyes, including movable eyes and prosthetic shells, were supplied and fitted free of charge through Health Service hospitals and the eye-fitting service of the Ministry, which had a number of centres throughout the country. Patients should be referred in the first instance by their own doctor to a hospital ophthalmologist.

Salk Vaccine Supplies

Mr. S. P. VIAN (Willesden, West, Lab.) wanted to know from what United States laboratory the supply of Salk vaccine was received with which the Medical Research Council intended to carry out trials in six areas last year; and what happened to these supplies. Mr. TURTON said on July 31 that the Medical Research Council received limited supplies of Salk vaccine in the spring of 1955 from

two firms in the United States, Parke, Davis and Company and Eli Lilly and Company. Some of these supplies were used for laboratory investigations and the remainder was still in the possession of the Council. No portion of this vaccine had been used for immunizing human beings.

Mental Patients.—At the end of 1955 there were 150,804 patients in mental hospitals in England and Wales, of whom 26.6% were voluntary, 0.3% temporary, and 73.1% certified. During the year 83,289 patients were admitted and 70,845 discharged.

Neglected Persons.—Of the neglected persons whose cases had been reviewed 2,172 were still detained in mental deficiency institutions at the end of July.

Mental Deficiency.—On December 31 last there were 52,871 persons resident in mental deficiency hospitals and homes under the Ministry of Health. In addition 1,273 beds were not in use owing to shortage of staff and 424 for other reasons.

Medico-Legal

NATUROPATH GAOLED FOR TWO YEARS

James Brown Neil, aged 57, naturopath, of Talbot Road, Bournemouth, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment at Bournemouth Quarter Sessions on August 1 for attempting to obtain from Olive Swift, an elderly Bournemouth woman, £500 in cash by falsely pretending that a doctor in the U.S.A. had diagnosed Mrs. Swift to be suffering from an advanced condition of cancer in the blood and that he, Neil, had power to treat and cure Mrs. Swift through the assistance of equipment called a supersonic pulsator. He pleaded not guilty.

Prosecuting, Mr. J. Stephenson said Mrs. Swift enjoyed excellent health, and in February last she received out of the blue a letter through the post headed "Healers' Corner, Dr. Franz Schwartz, M.D., (G.R.)."

The postmark was North Hollywood, California. The letter, signed "Dr. Johnson, M.D., Secretary," said, "I am the secretary to my beloved master Dr. Schwartz, who is the greatest cancer expert the world has so far known and he is also an apostle of the first church of Christ." The letter went on, "I am pleased to say he has consented to look into your case. This is very fortunate for he is an extremely busy man and in fact he is still supervising the treatment of our beloved President, Ike." The letter also asserted that Dr. Schwartz had treated one of the members of the Royal Family, who, in addition to a thousand-pound fee, had given another fifteen thousand pounds to help poor cases.

Another letter signed "Franz Schwartz, M.D." stated, "On the 15th instant (February) I sent my assistant under an hypnotic influence to your domicile. My assistant examined your sleeping body. He found that recently there has grown in your blood stream a neoplasm which is malignant. This cancer that is in the blood will eventually settle in the bowel where it will grow and destroy the bowel and you." Treatment was to be by broadcasting from the U.S.A. and England by wave-producing instruments. The letter said that the writer had asked Dr. Brown Neil, of Bournemouth, to treat Mrs. Swift under his, Dr. Schwartz's, direction with "our new supersonic-pulsator." In a letter in the same envelope signed "Dr. Johnson, M.D.," payment for the treatment was requested of 500 £1 notes in a sealed brown paper parcel, which Mrs. Swift was to hand to Dr. Neil after arranging an appointment.

Mrs. Olive Swift, giving evidence, said she took the letters to her solicitor and on instructions from the police wrote to the defendant for an appointment. She saw Neil on March 20, and took with her a sealed brown paper parcel. At her request, Neil took the parcel from her bag, but when police officers came in he put it back in the bag.

Detective-Inspector Phillipson-Masters said Neil had told him he did not know Dr. Schwartz, though he knew of his work in America. He denied having treated patients for Dr. Schwartz. In a later interview, Neil told him, "If it would help you, I am Dr. Schwartz."