

Letters, Notes, and Answers

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Microscope Lenses in the Tropics

Dr. A. H. SKINNER (Catholic Hospital, Hankow) writes: Can any experts offer advice on the preservation of microscope lenses in the Tropics and in storage? Is there any substance with which the lenses can be smeared to prevent "mould" destroying the surface and to keep the balsam mounting from drying out? I have read somewhere that heavy liquid paraffin containing 1 part in 1,500 of ol. cinnamomi is such a preservative, but I wish to have advice from those with experience, for example, in India and West Africa.

Dysmenorrhoea

Dr. D. C. MILN (Glasgow) writes: I have read with interest the reply of Mr. A. J. Hobson (February 1, p. 182) to "Country Practitioner" (December 28, p. 924). The prescription recommended gives some active freshly prepared calcium lactate, and is given in a mixture which will last for two and two-third days. I should be glad to know if: (1) this mixture is given constantly, or in premenstrual time, or actually during the menses; (2) Mr. Hobson believes that calcium can be introduced in a satisfactory way by the oral route without the aid of vitamin D; (3) the amount of available calcium given in the prescription can affect muscular contraction and vascular permeability. The mixture does not keep, and dispensing fees—for example, under N.H.I. schemes—will soon mount up. Would calcium tablets with vitamin D not be a more economical proposition?

Diphtheria Incidence

Dr. F. W. BUNTING (St. Helens) writes: The answer to Dr. R. M. Courtauld's question (February 8, p. 226) is the fact that only a small percentage of children throughout the country have been immunized against diphtheria. It is generally recognized that at least 50% of the child population will have to be immunized before a marked reduction in the incidence of the disease is to be expected. A lower percentage will give individual but not mass immunity. Certain areas, no doubt, have an immunized child population of 50% or over, but this does not affect the country as a whole. The results of intensive immunization of the child population of American and Canadian cities have proved beyond doubt the efficacy of the immunizing methods now in use.

Income Tax

Wife as Assistant. Expenses claimable

"SIGMA" inquires whether he can charge as a professional expense the cost of the board and lodging of his wife, who acts as his assistant. (Her salary is allowed.)

* * Rule 3 (b) applying to income from professions, etc., provides that "no sum shall be deducted in respect of . . . any disbursements or expenses of maintenance of the parties, their families or establishments . . ." This would seem to debar "Sigma" from claiming the expense of maintenance of his wife. (There is no unfairness in this because she is presumably not assessed to include the value of the maintenance she receives, and the special allowance of £45 for her earnings is no doubt covered by her salary.)

Renewal or Depreciation of Car

"HANTS" has in the past asked for a depreciation allowance on his cars, but has been allowed cost of replacement instead. He has now discarded two cars and is using a second-hand car purchased recently. What allowance can he claim?

* * The depreciation allowance is claimable as an alternative to "cost of replacement": it is not understood why the claim has been refused in the past, unless it was made for years which would be affected by both deductions. As the cars have now been sold we advise our correspondent to claim cost of renewal for one only of them, in the hope that he may pick up a further allowance if and when he buys a second car. On that basis he should claim £110 less £7 10s. (sale price of "Opel" car) = £102 10s. as a professional expense.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

Thomas Splint: Simple Device for Extension

Dr. JOHN A. HAYWARD (Oxford) writes: Various methods suggested in textbooks or correspondence are in use for securing extension in the application of a Thomas splint at the site of casualty. In the absence of skewers to go through a boot, spats, gaiters, or roller bandage to form a clove hitch round the ankle, a very simple device requiring only two triangular bandages will make a quite satisfactory extension with no undue pressure on the foot. (1) Place the centre of a narrow-fold triangular bandage under the concavity above the heel, cross the ends over the front of the ankle somewhat loosely, then wind them round the circle thus formed to make a ring encircling the top of the boot or ankle—a ring pad. (2) Place the centre of a narrow-fold triangular bandage across the sole of the boot immediately in front of the heel, bring the ends up on each side, and draw them through the ring; turn the loose ends downwards, and grasp them together in the right hand to make the necessary extension. The ends are now slipped through the ring of the splint, and the left hand takes up the extension as the splint is slipped upwards. Both hands are now available for tying the ends over the notch on the cross-bar by the usual methods. In first-aid classes I have found that the clove-hitch adjustments are a source of difficulty, and unless very carefully performed cause undue movement of the limb.

Books for Medical Prisoners of War

Miss E. HERDMAN, Secretary, Educational Books Section, Prisoners of War Department in the Red Cross and St. John War Organization, writes: We are receiving many requests for books from medical students and doctors who are now prisoners of war in Germany, and it has been suggested to us by the Royal College of Surgeons that you might be willing to publish an appeal to members of the medical profession to give books so that these men can continue their studies. Medical books are very expensive, but some of your readers may have textbooks (still up-to-date) with which they have now finished, and which would be very much appreciated by these prisoners. Books should be sent to us c/o Messrs. Blackwell, Broad Street, Oxford. We will gladly pay postage where necessary.

A.R.P. Dental Unit in Glasgow

A service probably unique among dentists has been established in Glasgow which other areas might be inclined to copy. There is a large first-aid post, which is situated in the centre of the city. The building is close to a most congested area, where casualties might be high, and from which it is very difficult to recruit intelligent part-time workers. Medical and nursing attention would present no difficulties by day, as there are always present during office hours a staff of doctors and of nurses. Night, however, presents the problem of an area difficult to organize, and a large group of fifty-six Glasgow dentists have taken over responsibility for this post at night by sleeping there in rosters of seven, doing one night in eight and thus avoiding a repetition of similar nights each week. The training began with courses in first aid, in anti-gas, and A.R.P. organization, attended by 100 dentists, and of these more than half are now giving this most valuable service to the community. The sleeping quarters are not sumptuous but they are comfortable, and part of each evening is spent in further training. The secretary of the Dentists' Committee is Mr. Leonard B. Gow, 546, Gallowgate, Glasgow, S.E., who would be pleased to receive the names of others willing to be trained to add to the rosters. This special service has more than proved its value, and has been warmly welcomed by the Lord Provost and the Medical Officer of Health on behalf of the A.R.P. authorities of the city.

Corrigendum

Surgeon Lieutenant R. ERNEST KING wishes to correct a statement in his article on "The Prophylaxis of Throat Infection" on page 154 of our issue for February 1. In carrying out his investigation into the prophylactic value of antiseptic sprays the strength used was a 15 to 20% solution made up from a standard solution of 1% sodium hypochlorite.