

PARLIAMENT

Health Services Bill: committee stage starts

The Standing Committee on the Health Services Bill began last week, sitting on 18 and 20 May. The Secretary of State for Social Services, Mr David Ennals, told the committee "The... Bill... follows lengthy discussions with the medical and dental professions, and embodies the carefully balanced compromise which was reached with them on 15 December, and which came to be known as the 'Goodman proposals.' " The Government intended, he said, to uphold the spirit of the proposals and the balance which was achieved in December. He reiterated that he would not be unbending in considering amendments designed to clarify the proposals. "By this," he added, "I mean amendments consistent with the principles of the Government's undertaking, which aims at separating private practice from NHS hospitals in an orderly and reasonable manner and preserving the right of private practice outside NHS hospitals."

On the Health Services Board Mr Ennals told the committee that it would be "independent of Government and Secretary of State, and that its membership shall be carefully balanced to reflect the different interests and the sharply opposing points of views." The Secretary of State proposed that the consideration of the schedule of beds to be phased out should be left to the conclusion of the committee's proceedings so that further consultation could take place and agreement reached on the 1000 beds to be withdrawn. On 20 May representatives of the BMA discussed aspects of the Bill with Mr Ennals; he told the committee "I shall not be reopening negotiations on the substance of the Bill but will attempt to reach some measure of agreement within the overall framework of the Bill."

Aims of the Opposition

In a statement on the day before the committee started, the Opposition spokesman on social services, Mr Patrick Jenkin, said that the Conservatives' three main objectives would be (1) to expose the hollowness of the Government's case for separating independent practice from the NHS, and to establish positively the case for expanding and integrating independent medicine within the framework of the NHS; (2) to seek proper protection for the patient, both NHS and private, who seemed to have been left out of the argument altogether; and (3) if they cannot force the Government to withdraw the Bill, at least to amend it drastically to meet the legitimate arguments of the professions affected.

MEDICAL NEWS

Health risks from asbestos

The Government announced in March (10 April, p 911) that the Health and Safety Commission had decided to set up an advisory committee to review the risks to health arising from exposure to asbestos and to make recom-

mendations whether any further protection was required. The membership of the committee was announced on 18 May. Three members were nominated by the CBI and three by the TUC. There are four members of the medical profession who specialise in epidemiology, lung diseases, and occupational medicine; two occupational hygienists; a consultant chemical engineer and physicist; an environmental health officer; and a representative of the national consumer council. The chairman will be Mr W Simpson, chairman of the Health and Safety Commission, and it will be left to the committee to decide whether any of its proceedings will be held in public.

Research Funds Guide

The third edition of the BMA's *Research Funds Guide* is now available. The Board of Science and Education has updated the guide (first published in 1968), which is helpful to doctors engaged on research who are hampered by lack of knowledge about possible sources of finance. The guide lists most organisations prepared to consider applications from doctors for grants for research projects and gives helpful hints on the best methods of applying for a grant. The guide is available from the Publications Department at the BMA, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR. Price £1 including postage.

British Cardiac Society

The following officers have been elected—Dr Walter Somerville (president), Dr Dennis Krikler (treasurer), Dr Graham Miller (honorary secretary), Dr Brian Pentecost (assistant secretary), Dr Celia Oakley (new council member).

COMING EVENTS

Campaign on the Use and Restriction of Barbiturates—Symposium on the use and restriction of barbiturates, 2 June, Cardiff. Details from CURB, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HX. (Tel 01-387 1003.)

National Association for Maternal and Child Welfare—63rd Annual Conference, 23-25 June, London. Details from the Association, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JG. (Tel 01-387 1874.)

British Association of Urological Surgeons—Annual meeting with the Canadian Urological Association, 23-25 June, London. Details from the Honorary Secretary, British Association of Urological Surgeons, Royal College of Surgeons, 35/43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PN.

"Medical and Safety Aspects of Sport Diving"—Symposium organised by the British Sub-Aqua Club Medical Committee, 25-27 June, St Donat's, Glamorgan. Details from Dr R H G Lloyd, 100 Penylan Road, Roath Park, Cardiff CF2 5HY. (Tel 0222 498482.)

SOCIETIES AND LECTURES

*For attending lectures marked * a fee is charged or a ticket is required. Applications should be made first to the institution concerned.*

Wednesday, 2 June

INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGY—1.15 pm, Dr Patterson Reaves (USA): Middle cerebral occlusion.
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY—5.30 pm, Dr J H Rey: The schizoid mode of being.
ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL—5 pm, Professor P Turner: Some mechanisms of drug interaction.

Thursday, 3 June

ROYAL SOCIETY—4.30 pm, Leeuwenhoek Lecture by G H Beale, FRS: The varied contributions of protozoa to genetical knowledge.
ST MARY'S HOSPITAL MEDICAL SCHOOL—5.15 pm, Aleck Bourne Lecture by Professor J M Beazley: Taking control of labour.
SOCIETY OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRY—1.30 pm, agm of Microbiology, Fermentation and Enzyme Technology Group.

Saturday, 5 June

NORTH OF ENGLAND OTOLARYNGOLOGICAL SOCIETY—At Doncaster Royal Infirmary, 12.15 pm, 85th Ordinary Meeting.*

BMA NOTICES

Diary of Central Meetings

JUNE	
2 Wed	Council , 10 am.
3 Thurs	General Purposes Subcommittee (GMSC), 10.30 am.
11 Fri	ARM Agenda Committee, 10 am.
17 Thurs	General Medical Services Committee, 10 am.
22 Tues	Scottish Committee for Hospital Medical Services (7 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh), 10.45 am.
23 Wed	BMA Council Executive, 2 pm.
23 Wed	Maternity Services Subcommittee (GMSC), 2 pm.
24 Thurs	Executive Subcommittee (CCHMS), 10 am.
25 Fri	Scottish General Medical Services Committee (7 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh), 10.30 am.

Division Meetings to be Held

*Members proposing to attend meetings marked * are asked to notify in advance the honorary secretary concerned.*

Greenwich—At Woodlands, Vanbrugh Hill, Saturday, 5 June, 7.30 pm, Royal Medical Benevolent Fund Blackheath Guild barn dance.*

Ipswich—At Ipswich Hospital, Tuesday, 1 June, 8.30 pm, Dr C H Hawkes: "Modern advances in the treatment of epilepsy." (Preceded by buffet supper, 7.30 pm.)

Manchester—At Boyd House, Tuesday, 1 June, 8 for 8.30 pm, Mr W T Farrington: "Seasonal allergic rhinitis."*

Portsmouth and South-east Hampshire—At St Mary's Hospital, Friday, 4 June, 7.30 for 8 pm, ladies' night, guest speaker Dame Albertine Winner.*

APPOINTMENTS

BIRMINGHAM AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY (TEACHING)—Mr I McKenzie Miller (consultant orthopaedic surgeon).

SOUTH GLAMORGAN HEALTH AUTHORITY—The following consultants have been appointed—Mr J C Chawla (rehabilitation); Dr D C Beckingham (venereologist); Dr K A Johansen (obstetrician and gynaecologist).

NORTH-WESTERN RHA—The following consultants have been appointed: Dr D J Allan, Dr A M Menon (anaesthetists); Mr W D Richmond (urologist); Dr J P Brady, Dr T L Heyworth (radiologists).

WESSEX RHA—Mr R A W McDowell (consultant in plastic surgery).

Notice to authors

When original articles and letters for publication are not submitted exclusively to the *British Medical Journal* this must be stated. For detailed instructions to authors see page 6 of the issue dated 3 January 1976.

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