

of all deaths in Scotland during 1975; the report states that there were only six maternal deaths in 1975 compared with 16 in each of the two previous years, and sexually transmitted diseases continued to decline in Scotland—against the international trend. The number of abortions in Scotland, which had steadily grown during the early years of the 1970s, has now levelled off at a rate of 7.4 per 1000 women, though abortions among younger women continue to rise. Infant and perinatal mortality rates continued to decline during 1975, falling to 17.2 and 21 per 1000 births respectively; however, these rates vary greatly between health board areas.

The annual report looks forward to the day when accident and emergency work becomes a recognised specialty, and obsolete and improvised accident and emergency units are gradually being replaced by purpose-built modern facilities. The Scottish Home and Health Department describes contingency planning co-ordinated by the Scottish Office to ensure that the NHS can cope with any disaster occurring on a North Sea oil rig. Oil has brought many problems and the SHHD is represented on a working party of specialists set up to examine these. The number of doctors both in the hospital service and in general practice has risen steadily though it was decided that from October 1975 there should be no further general increase in the junior training grades, preregistration house officer posts excepted.

#### New chairman of Distinction Awards Committee

Sir Stanley Clayton, who was president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists from 1972 to 1975, has been appointed the new chairman of the Advisory Committee on Distinction Awards. Sir Hector MacLennan retired from the chair on 31 July after having held the office since May 1971.

#### Medicines Commission

In its annual report for 1975 the Medicines Commission states it has discussed the problem of keeping doctors informed about medicines and the difficulty of producing an official publication that would secure doctors' attention at the times they are called upon to prescribe. The Commission is giving further consideration to this.—*Annual Report for 1975 of the Medicines Commission* (HMSO, £1.05 net).

#### Social implications of rabies

A working party of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association has just produced a report on "the professional and social implications of rabies as an endemic disease in the United Kingdom, with specific reference to the role of the small animal practitioner." "It is obvious," the report concludes, "that the re-establishment of rabies as an endemic disease problem . . . will result in radical changes in respect of attitude towards both pet animals and wildlife." The responsibilities of the veterinary surgeon employed in small animal practice will be considerable and the report outlines the problems and the practical

measures necessary to solve them. As well as giving practical guidance to the veterinary profession there are proposals for educating the public, particularly the pet-owning public. Dr J M Dunlop, a community physician, represented the BMA on the working party and the report, which costs £1, is available from BSAVA Publications, 2 Friarswood Road, Newcastle, Staffs.

#### Dermatology departments

The Royal College of Physicians of London has produced a short report on the staffing and equipment of dermatology departments. It considers that a reasonable staffing structure would be one consultant per 200 000 of the population. Copies are available from the college at 11 St Andrew's Place, Regent's Park, London NW1 4LE.

#### RCN to become a trade union?

The Council of the Royal College of Nursing decided at a meeting on 22 July to take action to be certificated as an independent trade union under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974. The decision was taken because recent legislation has accorded privileges to trade unions in promoting the interests of members which are denied to other staff organisations, including the RCN. This course of action will enable the RCN to continue to protect the interests of its members both individually and corporately as well as ensuring that the college is not put at a disadvantage in relation to other NHS staff associations.

#### Help for spastics

A new series of leaflets giving information and advice to the parents of handicapped children is being issued by the Spastics Society. *Your child is spastic . . . but* and *The handicapped child within the family* are the first two in the series: both consist of a single folded sheet of 1000 words of advice, cartoons, and addresses. Copies may be obtained from the Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

#### Drug exports

According to the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry's annual report for 1975-6 the industry's trade surplus in 1975 increased by 32% to reach another record figure of £276 million. This represented one-third of the entire trade surplus for the whole chemical industry of the UK.

#### Experiments on animals

A total of just over 5.3 million experiments were performed on animals in 1975. Of these just over a million were for the mandatory testing of medicinal products. The total number has remained much the same since 1968. Among irregularities which came to notice were the following. Two licensees permitted films of experiments to be made without seeking Home Office authority. Two licensees transported experimental animals without

permission, in one case to Canada. A senior lecturer in physiology carried out demonstrations to students without the necessary authority. Several licensees performed experiments without the cover of the appropriate certificate. In all cases it was concluded there had been no deliberate intention to avoid the requirements of the Act.—*Experiments on Living Animals* (HMSO, 22p net).

#### People in the News

Professor Sir Cyril Clarke, FRS, is the principal recipient of the John Scott Award for 1976 by the Board of Directors of City Trusts for the invention of the method of prevention of rhesus haemolytic disease by injection.

Mr Charles Hunnisett, a resident of Hove, has personally donated £235 000 to enable the Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton, to install one of the new EMI whole body scanners.

The Rogers prize for 1976 of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries has been awarded to Dr R A S Keighley for an essay on the treatment of the sick poor in Britain.

Dr J Tudor Hart, general practitioner from Glyncoirwg, Glamorgan, has been appointed Sir Harry Jephcott visiting professor to the University of Birmingham, attached to the faculty of medicine and dentistry, to help in the teaching of general practice for the academic year 1976-7.

#### COMING EVENTS

**Drawings and Watercolours by Dr Henry Fraser**—Exhibition 30 July-15 August, Langton Gallery, 3 Langton Street, London SW10.

#### BMA NOTICES

##### Division Meetings to be Held

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

**Eastbourne**—At Firlie Place, near Lewes, Thursday, 12 August, 7.30 pm, annual ladies night.\*

##### 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.

Correspondence on editorial business should be addressed to the Editor, *British Medical Journal*, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR. Telephone: 01-387 4499. Telegrams: *Aitology, London WC1*. Communications will not be acknowledged unless a stamped addressed postcard or an international reply coupon is enclosed.

Authors wanting reprints of their articles should notify the Publishing Manager, BMA House, Tavistock Square, WC1H 9JR, on receipt of proofs.

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