

## MEDICAL NEWS

### Section 70 inquiry agreed

On 22 November Mr Ennals, Secretary of State for Social Services, announced that he had agreed to set up a public inquiry under section 70 of the NHS Act 1946 into the suspension of Dr Terence Lawlor from his post at Normansfield Hospital, Teddington. A BMA press statement issued on the same day reads as follows: "The BMA has for two months been pressing the Secretary of State to recognise the importance of the principles involved in this matter by making this a high level inquiry under section 70 of the NHS Act which has power to subpoena witnesses and documents. Since the inquiry was suspended last week the BMA has made further representations, as has the Royal College of Psychiatrists. We are pleased that Mr Ennals has acceded to our request."

The previous day the Royal College of Psychiatrists had said that it was alarmed at the withdrawal of Dr Terence Lawlor and the consultant psychiatrist appointed to the independent panel of inquiry into the Normansfield Hospital set up by the South-west Thames RHA and the apparent intention to proceed with the inquiry with or without medical representation.

The statement continued: "The present inquiry set up by the RHA who initiated the suspension of our member last May is considered to be grossly inadequate because it has no power to subpoena witnesses or the submission of documents. Evidence is not taken on oath and anyone can refuse to testify. The college was invited to nominate a replacement for the consultant on the panel or submit the names of people who might be approached but regrets that in view of the college's previously stated position, now aggravated by the recent events, feels unable to do so or to change its view. The college strongly and urgently requests that even at this late stage the Secretary of State should set up an inquiry under Section 70 of the NHS Act 1946. This request endorses the statement made by the college on 26 October and coincides with the wishes of the Joint Consultants Committee, the BMA, and, we believe, the opinion of the vast majority of our membership."

### Marburg disease

Marburg disease and viral haemorrhagic fever have been made notifiable diseases by regulations introduced on 19 November. These give medical officers for environmental health powers similar to those they already have for the control of smallpox and rabies. In particular, patients suspected of having a notifiable disease may be legally required to be admitted to hospital.

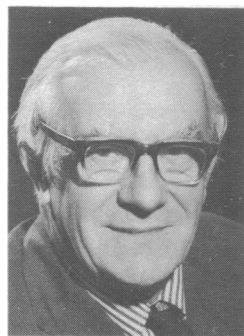
### Hospital closures

A draft regional plan announced last week by the North-east Thames Regional Health Authority will lead to a reduction of 4600 hospital beds out of its present total of 32000. The plan, designed to take account of the RAWP proposals (p 1280) is based on assumptions about the region's budget for the year 1977-8. Hospitals to be closed include Brentwood, St Faith's, Victoria, City of London Maternity, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson,

National Temperance, New End, Southwood, German, London Jewish, Metropolitan, Queen Mary's (for the East End), St Mary's, Plaistow, St Matthew's, Bearsted Memorial, Connaught, and Dagenham.

### Board of Science

Sir John Stallworthy is the new chairman of the BMA Board of Science and Education, having taken office on 19 November. Sir John, who is Emeritus Nuffield Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Oxford University, was president of the BMA in 1975-6. He is also president of the Medical Protection Society and a past president of the Royal Society of Medicine. He came to Britain after qualifying in medicine in New Zealand, and has spent most of his professional career at Oxford.



### Farewell dinner

To mark the end of the BMA's three years' administration of the Standing Committee a dinner was held at BMA House on 19 November. Mr Walpole Lewin, president of the committee, and Mrs Lewin, and Dr James Cameron, Chairman of Council, and Mrs Cameron received the guests. Among the speakers were Dr Gunter Schuster, Director-General of Research, Science and Education in the EEC, Mr Lewin, and the Secretary of State for Social Services, the Rt Hon David Ennals.

### Work for the handicapped

Mentally handicapped adults make up 1% of the potential work force, but employers and unions are often reluctant to consider their employment. In fact practical experience shows that the mentally handicapped are often steady, reliable workers who learn to keep up with the rest and earn production bonuses, says G G Callaghan in *Employing the Mentally Handicapped* (published by the Lincolnshire North Community Health Council, price 65p including postage). Employers interested in the possibility of taking on mentally handicapped workers are advised to contact the nearest Adult Training Centre run by the Department of Health and Social Security.

### People in the News

Professor Dorothy M C Hodgkin, OM, FRS, has been awarded the Copley Medal of the Royal Society for her outstanding work on the structure of complex molecules, particularly penicillin, vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, and insulin.

Mr J S Tomkinson, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist to Guy's Hospital and Queen Charlotte's Hospital for Women, has been appointed secretary-general of the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics.

## COMING EVENTS

**Royal College of Physicians of London**—Teach-in "The HLA system and its association with disease," 7 December, London. For details see advertisement at p x.

## BMA NOTICES

### Diary of Central Meetings

	DECEMBER
2 Thurs	Central Committee for Hospital Medical Services, 10 a.m.
7 Tues	Scottish Hospital Junior Staffs Committee (7 Drumshugh Gardens, Edinburgh), 2 pm.
9 Thurs	Journal Committee, 2.30 p.m.
16 Thurs	General Medical Services Committee, 10 am.
22 Wed	Council, 10 am.

### Division Meetings to be Held

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

**Buckinghamshire**—At Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Friday, 3 December, 8 for 8.15 pm, annual BMA lecture by Mr Julian Nott: "Hot air ballooning in five continents."\* (Guests are invited.)

**Burton upon Trent and District**—At Stanhope Arms, Tuesday, 30 November, 7 for 7.30 pm, dinner/lecture, speaker Mr Tregelles on the Establishment.\*

**Darlington and Northallerton Divisions**—At Scotch Corner Hotel, Friday, 3 December, 7.45 for 8.30 pm, joint annual dinner dance.\*

**East Surrey**—At Redhill General Hospital, Tuesday, 30 November, 8 pm, Mr Michael Awty: "Facial fractures."\*

**Exeter**—At Postgraduate Medical Centre, Friday, 3 December, 8.15 for 8.30 pm, Professor W G Hoskins: "Recollections of a local historian," followed by election of representative to ARM.

**Guildford**—At Bramley Grange Hotel, Wednesday, 1 December, 8 for 8.15 pm, supper/lecture, speaker Dr Brian Lewis: "The state of play in medical politics."\*

**Grimsby**—At Winter Gardens, Cleethorpes, Thursday, 2 December, 9 pm, annual BMA ball.\*

**Leicestershire and Rutland**—At Grand Hotel, Saturday, 4 December, 7.30 for 8 pm, joint dinner dance with the Leicester Medical Society.\*

**Nottingham**—At City Hospital, Wednesday, 1 December, 8.30 pm, joint meeting with Nottingham Medico-Chirurgical Society, speaker Professor Harold Ellis: "Breast cancer—the unsolved problem."\*

**Plymouth**—At Plymouth Medical Centre, Thursday, 2 December, 8 pm, meeting to elect representative for ARM.

**Scunthorpe**—At Royal Hotel, Thursday, 2 December, 8 for 8.30 pm, annual dinner dance.\*

**South-east Essex**—At Garon's No 1 Banqueting Suite, Friday, 3 December, 7.30 for 8 pm, dinner and dance.\*

**Waltham Forest**—At Whipps Cross Hospital, Wednesday, 1 December, Dr David M Paul: "The clinical aspects of forensic medicine."\* (Preceded by buffet supper, guests are invited.)

**Wandsworth and East Merton**—At St James's Hospital, Monday, 29 November, 8 pm, meeting on "What Europe has to offer."\*

**West London**—At St Charles Hospital, Wednesday, 1 December, 8.15 for 8.30 pm, meeting to elect representatives for 1977 ARM, and talk by Dr David Gullick.

### 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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