

not be content to accept as the gross income of the whole the cash received from only a part of the practice. They will be entitled to require "S. P. G." to depart from the cash basis and adopt the "earnings" or "book debts" basis for the future; or, as an alternative, may be willing to accept the cash basis on condition that the whole of the receipts are brought into the computation, even though a part may represent capital and not income so far as he is concerned.

"Child Allowance"

"A. B." has a son 22 years of age who is taking a postal correspondence course for an accountancy examination—working on it at home the whole of his time. Can "A. B." claim the allowance for this financial year?

** The matter is governed by Section 21 of the Finance Act, 1920, and the relative requirement is that the child "is receiving full-time instruction at any university, college, school, or other educational establishment." We do not know of any judicial decision on the matter, but in our opinion a vocational postal course of tuition would not provide sufficient ground for a claim.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

Barbiturate Poisoning

Messrs. MAY AND BAKER LIMITED, manufacturing chemists, Dagenham, London, write: Our attention has been drawn to the letter by Dr. Stafford Geddes with this heading in your issue of April 14th (p. 689), dealing with the cumulative effect of the barbituric group of drugs. We must confess that it does not appear to us that the case described affords any proof of the cumulative effect of the drugs referred to. The dosage of sodium soneryl should be based on the weight of the patient, and it would be interesting to know what the weight of the patient was. The patient was "apparently" in good health, but it is not evident that any subsequent examination was made to establish whether this really was the case. We know of only one death caused by soneryl, and that in the case of a lady whose general state of health was such that she should definitely not have taken a hypnotic of any description. She actually took a very large overdose. We do, however, know of cases where up to 100 tablets of soneryl have been taken, and the patient recovered. In one instance 1,500 grains were taken in a month. We maintain that soneryl is the least toxic of all barbituric acid derivatives, and a perfectly safe drug when administration is carefully controlled by a medical man.

Handy-women and Puerperal Sepsis

"Q. Q." writes: There is one factor which is persistently ignored in these discussions, and that is the problem of the untrained nurse. Practitioners are not supposed to attend maternity cases with untrained persons, but they do so in scores of cases, and I have to also. In these times of poverty, even if maternity benefit is available, there is not sufficient to pay both a doctor and a trained nurse, and hence the poor patient and the doctor have no choice. The remedy is not easy, but I suggest that the local public assistance committees take these cases on their merits and grant assistance, provided, of course, that the practice of these women was declared illegal. A few of these women are trustworthy, but many are not, and I have refused to attend cases with some, with the risk of the loss of the patients and much unpleasantness. Numerous examples of their irregularities can be given, which the medical officers of health and practitioners are up against. While attending a normal case an untrained person may have been in contact with a puerperal case or an abortion, and may be doing all kinds of nursing in the neighbourhood, septic or otherwise, which the attending doctor may know nothing about. Recently I had to report a woman to the M.O.H. here for doing vaginal examinations, without any precautions, before my arrival at a case! Surely this is a direction in which improvement could be made?

The Young Idea on Health

Over 25,000 children in elementary schools in Great Britain and Northern Ireland sat down one day in October last to answer five questions on how best to avoid disease. The best answers from each school, 582 in all, were sent up to the Empire Health Week Committee of the Royal Sanitary Institute for adjudication, and the assessors have now made their award, which is signed by Dr. George F. Buchan as chairman of council. A medal will be presented to each of the winners, while the successful schools will hold the two challenge shields for a year. Begun on a

modest scale in 1912, Health Week is now firmly established. It is celebrated annually in hundreds of centres in the United Kingdom and in many cities and towns in India, the oversea Dominions, and the Colonies. The King and Queen have honoured the movement with their patronage. Many of the papers sent in for the competition reached a high standard, showing a grasp of the subject which does credit to their teaching. Some of the answers are unconventional: one boy was asked to describe the spine. "The spine," he said, "is a bundle of bones which runs up and down the back and holds the ribs together. The skull sits on one end and I sit on the other."

Treatment of Bilharzia Disease

Dr. F. G. Cawston (Durban) writes: The discovery of specifics has fostered the impression that parasites may be destroyed by a sufficiently large dose of a drug, even though its value is sometimes greatly enhanced by the addition of other drugs and by the use of vaccines. If antimony alone were responsible for the death of schistosomes a remedy would depend entirely on its antimony content, and the required dose of tartar emetic would cure a case of bilharzia disease in less than a month. Success depends rather on certain changes which are gradually brought about in the blood of patients whilst under the influence of antimony, which, in therapeutic doses, is an excellent hepatic stimulant. These changes are hindered by anything which upsets the general health, and attempts at the rapid destruction of these large blood parasites may even be dangerous. The changes in the constitution of the blood are indicated by the response to the complement-fixation test and by the eosinophil count. These changes help to explain why recent infections with a high eosinophilia are more difficult to cure than chronic infections. Toxic effects may cause the temporary disappearance of escaping ova. The final test of cure is evidenced by their permanent absence from both urine and faeces, by the return to normal of the eosinophil count six to eight weeks after treatment has been discontinued, and by the general improvement of the health. Evidence to show that the male parasites are dead has always been omitted from records of alleged cures where treatment has been continued for less than four weeks. Tartar emetic has been shown to effect a true cure when skilfully administered over a period of one month. Other preparations usually require to be given in two distinct courses before both male and female parasites are destroyed.

Allotments for the Unemployed

The Allotments Committee (Friends House, Euston Road, N.W.1) announces that it has accumulated a fund out of which it can offer seeds, potatoes, tools, and fertilizers at greatly reduced prices for unemployed men and women, those who are recovering from a bout of unemployment, and others who are seriously impoverished. Help has already been given to 100,000 unemployed men, and it is hoped to increase this number considerably during the current year. Information about the obtaining of allotments is available at the offices of town clerks, labour exchanges, or from the Allotments Committee. Details of the scheme can also be obtained from Friends House (Form H). It is added that cultivation of an allotment does not affect a claim for unemployment benefit.

"The Open Door"

Under the title "The Open Door" Dr. Barnardo's Homes, 18-26, Stepney Causeway, E.1, have issued an illustrated booklet showing how orphan and destitute boys and girls are rescued from pitiful surroundings, given a new environment, and trained for ways of useful citizenship. This title is apt, because under the charter no destitute child is ever refused admission. In 1932 alone 1,735 destitute children passed through the open door, and more than 1,500 young people, trained and equipped, passed out into the world. The family supported by Dr. Barnardo's Homes now numbers 8,478 boys and girls and babies; and on an average five newcomers join it every day. In all, 114,102 children have been admitted.

The photograph of Dr. David Lees reproduced with our obituary notice on April 7th was taken by Mr. Andrew H. Baird, scientific instrument maker, of Edinburgh.

Vacancies

Notifications of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, and 46 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 44 and 45.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 236.