

British Medical Journal



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THE MEDICAL DEFENCE UNION

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EASTER HOLIDAYS

Owing to the Easter Holidays our issue of APRIL 11th will close for press at noon on Tuesday, April 7th, and all Advertisements or Communications intended for this number must therefore reach us by first post
MONDAY, APRIL 6th.

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Subscriptions—Literary Earnings

"X. Y." has held an appointment under a Government Department since April, 1935. Can he deduct as expenses subscriptions to medical societies and post-graduate lectures? Prior to taking up the appointment he wrote for a professional journal, his receipts from that source being: 1933-4, £82; 1934-5, £83; 1935-6, £14. The two latter years have been, or will be, assessed on the basis of the actual year's receipts. What is the position as regards 1933-4?

** The first point is covered by a decision of Mr. Justice Rowlatt in the case of *Simpson v. Tate*, the effect of which is that "X. Y." cannot claim the subscriptions as expenses unless he is required to belong to the societies by the terms of his appointment under the Ministry. As regards the second question, the £82 is assessable for 1933-4 whether the income is assessable under Case I as professional earnings or under Case VI as miscellaneous profits. The point is that when an income-bearing source comes into operation the first year's income is assessable on the amount of income of the actual year.

Motor Car Allowance

"ANTHROPOS" bought a new car in 1928 for £350. Depreciation allowance was given annually, reducing the written-down value after deducting the allowances to 1935-6 inclusive to £103. In 1935 he sold it for £25 and bought a new car for £240. What should he claim?

** (a) Obsolescence allowance—that is, £103 - £25 = £78—to be treated as if it were an actual expense of the year 1935, and (b) depreciation allowance for 1936-7 of £240 at 22 per cent. = £53. In each case the allowance is subject to the deduction of one-twelfth the agreed proportion for private use.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

"Dialectical Materialism"

Dr. S. LEFF (London, N.19) writes with reference to the letter from Dr. Frederick Dillon: I would remark that people do not differ in the fundamental principles of dialectical materialism but only in the application thereof. I do not think it is possible to apply dialectical materialism to any specific aspect of medicine, such as clinical psychology, but it is, however, of fundamental importance for every scientist to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the principles. Dialectical materialism is an all-embracing philosophy which not only has taken its place as the only logical social science—as evidenced by the modern trends and developments of society—but has also a profound significance in the development of other sciences. The approach of the research worker to his particular subject is naturally of great importance. The physicist or biologist who is an idealist almost invariably comes into conflict in his general conclusions with the physicist or biologist who is a materialist. Manifestly the taking up of a correct standpoint in philosophy of necessity aids one's approach to any problem in research work. The dialectical materialist, therefore, usually finds himself at an advantage in comparison with the research worker who has no general philosophy, or who adheres to the popular but erroneous ones. Similarly—though it may seem far-fetched—a doctor in his approach to his patients, and especially the psychological misfits, is at an advantage, because as a dialectical materialist he has the knowledge of the position of medicine as a science in relation to other sciences, and also of the individual in his relation to society.

Dr. W. J. LOGIE (Falkirk) writes: The source of the two "principles" of Soviet medicine referred to by Dr. Dillon is easily found. Marx, who never invented anything, "lifted" his philosophy from Hegel, and any student of the *Science of Logic* could enlighten Dr. Dillon as to what the principles really mean. The *Science of Logic* is more intelligible in German, but excellent English translations exist. The Soviet application seems rather school-boyish.

Iodoform

Dr. D. LEONARD LEES (Brecon) writes: May I be permitted to extol the virtues of iodoform as one of the best agents for the prevention of sepsis in wounds occurring under conditions not surgically clean. I have been using it as a routine in all such wounds for the last twelve years and can recall only one case where healing by first intention did not occur, and this was a lacerated wound badly contaminated by road dirt. Recently I have sutured wounds

which I would not have dared to do a few years ago when using the time-honoured iodine as an antiseptic. Another advantage of iodoform is the fact that it is painless. I would commend its inclusion in all first-aid outfits to the exclusion of iodine, and suggest that its merits be investigated by those who direct first-aid instruction, as I am convinced that it is far superior to that agent, now generally used.

Electrotherapy in 1784

Dr. VAUGHAN PENDRED (East Sheen) writes: This surely must be one of the earliest of the therapeutic applications of electricity to the human body on record. An antiquarian who is at work on the antiquities of Pulborough, Sussex, discovered the item in the churchwarden's account book for the year 1784: "Mr. Taylor's Bill for Electricity performed on Wm. White, 9s. 6d." The earliest book on electricity, *De magnete*, was published by Dr. Gilbert of Colchester at the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign (1600), so that nearly two centuries had elapsed before this treatment was applied to William White. Clearly it must have been well established 150 years ago or the churchwardens would never have paid such a sum, considerable in 1784, for the treatment of a pauper. May I ask the electrotherapists to tell us more of the history of their craft.

Pediculosis Capitis in a Factory

"T. D. C." writes: I treat this trouble with a solution of carbolic, 1 in 20. Cover the eyes so that none of the solution gets in them, wet the hair and scalp, and the head may then be washed, for the vermin are killed as soon as they touch the carbolic solution. A powder impregnated with carbolic may be put down the neck of the child, between the skin and the clothing, and that, with the warmth of the body, kills the insects and the odour prevents reinfection of the clothing.

Disclaimers

Mr. S. G. BROWNE, F.R.C.S. (London, S.E.14) writes: My attention has been drawn to several paragraphs which have appeared in the Press recently, giving highly coloured accounts of my career. I presume that the facts were drawn from an official report of a public body whose scholarship I held as a student. The inferences must be the result of journalistic imagination, since neither I nor the members of my family have at any time given interviews to pressmen.

Mr. W. H. SUMMERSKILL (London, W.) writes: I beg to disclaim any responsibility for a reference in the lay Press to my work on the treatment of strabismus. The information was obtained from my article "A Non-operative Treatment of Squint," published recently in a medical journal. When telephoned, I refused to be interviewed or to give any explanation on the subject.

Dr. STANLEY J. HARTFALL and Dr. HUGH G. GARLAND write: During the past week there has been renewed publicity in the Press with regard to the gold treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, and our names have been associated with most of the articles. We discover that the Press had been circulated by a news agency, and paragraphs were transposed from a short article which we published in the last number of the *Leeds Medical Society Magazine*. We wish to disclaim all association with this publicity, of which we had no knowledge prior to its appearance.

Corrigendum

In our note on *The Fight Against Disease* (March 14th, p. 538) the estimate of "£600,000 a year" was erroneous. This sum represents the amount contributed since 1912 for anti-vivisection propaganda.

The British Drug Houses (Graham Street, City Road, London, N.1) have just published a booklet in reference to gonadan, the gonadotropic hormone, and the hormones of the ovary, oestroform, oestroform "B," and progestin. The introductory chapter gives a brief outline of the role of the different hormones during the stages of the menstrual cycle. A free copy will be sent to any reader who applies to the address given above.

Vacancies

Notifications of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, and 61 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 58 and 59.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 127.