

detailed to be really useful is not likely to become available. On the particular class of expense to which "R. H." refers—cost of motor car and gloves, dust coat, etc.—we fear the law is against him; such expenses cannot be correctly said to be incurred wholly and exclusively for professional purposes—they are too personal in character.

Cost of Indoor Assistant.

"A. W." inquires what is "the usual amount allowed off income tax for the board and lodging of an indoor assistant." He suggests 30s. per week, but the inspector of taxes considers 20s. adequate in view of the fact that one-third of rent, rates, etc., have been allowed.

* * It is impossible to lay down any general rule where so much depends on the circumstances of each individual case. If the one-third allowed is adequate to cover that portion of the house which is occupied, wholly or partly, by the assistant, and also the relative cost of cleaning, laundry, general domestic service, etc., then the question is reduced to an estimate of the out-of-pocket expenditure on the assistant's food, etc. *Prima facie* the "one-third" is quite as open to attack as the 20s. per week.

Expenses of Employment.

"A. E. I." inquires with regard to expenses incurred as an assistant medical officer of health.

* * It is a fact that no deduction can be made in respect of interest which would have been received if he had not had to use the capital to build a garage; on the other hand, deduction can be made in respect of the rental value, as assessed to income tax, of the garage so erected. Further, the expenses allowable are those actually paid out for the purposes of the employment, and exclude any allowance for work done—for example, cleaning, etc., by himself. The authorities are within their rights in restricting the expenses allowed to exclude those which reasonably relate to private use.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

SECURITY OF TENURE IN PUBLIC POSTS.

"A. M." writes: I watch with interest the discussion initiated by Dr. McManus under the title of "Security of tenure in public posts," setting forth as it does the many grievances of medical officers in the mental hospitals service, and my only fear is that the dread "This correspondence must now cease" may appear before the British Medical Association has been induced to do a little more on our behalf. The varied opinions already expressed only go to show the extremes of conditions that exist in different institutions, and the need for some uniformity to be brought about by an authoritative body. In my few years of service I have met several colleagues from other institutions, all with similar complaints, and there has been some talk of forming a society to further our interests without victimization, but a higher body, such as the British Medical Association, is needed for a task of this sort. The main points have already been stressed: security of tenure, participation in administration, access to the committee, fair promotion, and facilities for study; but, as may be seen from other letters, conditions vary from place to place. This is surely an urgent reason for advising against entering the service—the uncertainty of local conditions. Until the British Medical Association can see its way to agitate for justice and equality of conditions the mental service must perforce remain the purview of those "with influence."

BIOCHEMICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN ALLERGIC CONDITIONS.

DR. R. CHALMERS (Darlington) writes: I am in full agreement with Drs. Barber and Oriol (November 17th, p. 880) when they say that "allergy is beyond question the most important biological and medical problem that exists or ever has existed." I have been doing routine chemical and microscopical examinations of urines in my cases for the past ten years, and some five years ago a letter of mine appeared in the *Journal* on what I termed "leucin bodies in the urine." I referred to them as being impure forms, and the only reason for calling them such was because of their microscopical appearance simulating those depicted in Simon's *Clinical Diagnosis*, and that I always found them in cases where I suspected there was present a chemical disturbance of the liver. In the intervening years I have sought, *ad nauseam*, to find an explanation of these bodies by sending them to laboratories and to high authorities in the medical world; at last I sent drawings and descriptions of these to the medical journals for publication, to try and get some enlightenment. These were returned to me, until I could tell what their nature was. I have, however, kept on noting and recording these and allied findings in my patients, and now have records of many hundreds of different kinds of cases. After reading Dr. Oriol's account of his ether reaction I had an opportunity of trying it in a case of severe jaundice. I found it strongly positive, and on examination of the serum found minute oil globules as he describes, and also beautiful specimens of what I have designated "leucin" bodies. These did not show in the centrifuged specimen of the urine itself. . . . I am very pleased to see that Dr. Oriol, who found his ether reaction positive first in a case of cardiac failure, has raised the point of what relation

this hepatic tendency may have on cardiac pathology. In a paper which I sent to the *Journal* a month ago, but which has not been published, I refer to the same point, and state that it is my belief, come to from continuous observation of my cases along these biochemical lines, that the hepatic chemistry is a very important element in such diseases as coronary disease, angina pectoris, and myocardial disease.

PREMATURE SEPARATION OF PLACENTA DUE TO RELATIVE SHORTNESS OF THE UMBILICAL CORD.

DR. C. J. HILL AITKEN (Kilnhurst, near Rotherham) refers to a previous account by him of a relatively short umbilical cord causing retention of the membranes *British Medical Journal*, April 16th, 1927, p. 750. He now reports another case of the same kind, in which shortness of the cord caused delay in a breech case until birth of the shoulders, the placenta and membranes being torn from their site, with subsequent haemorrhage into the uterus. The patient's pulse, which had been normal, increased to 120, and she began to look pinched. She was lightly anaesthetized, and a boggy tumour was felt rising to above the umbilicus. Despite good pains, there was no progress in the birth of the head owing to distension of the uterus. The third stage of delivery was uneventful. Pressure on the abdomen was applied during delivery.

SANITARY INSPECTORS.

MR. WILLIAM G. KERSHAW, M.B.E. (President of the London Centre of the Sanitary Inspectors' Association), writes: I have read with considerable interest the remarks on the teaching of hygiene in your issue of October 27th. I hesitate to question any conclusions at which so great an authority as Professor Jameson has arrived, but I would point out that his observations in regard to the general educational qualifications for entrants to the inspectorate do a great injustice to those would-be candidates who have served their apprenticeship in one or other of the building trades, because he infers that apprentices in the building crafts to-day are so lacking in general education as to be unable to pass, if they have not already done so, one of the examinations mentioned in the regulations of the Joint Examination Board. If such is the case, then I doubt if they would be competent "to meet a builder upon his own ground," because, to-day, clerks of works, builders, and their managers and foremen are, generally speaking, highly educated men who have found it much more profitable to remain in the building trades, where higher remuneration is obtainable than that which the Ministry of Health permits local authorities to pay to their sanitary inspectors. I wholeheartedly admit the great advantage which a practical training in the building trade is to a sanitary inspector, and what a valuable asset it is to the authority he serves, but if craftsmen are to be encouraged to devote the time and money necessary to obtain the training and qualification in the many duties which a sanitary inspector to-day has to perform which have no association at all with the building trade, for example, as Professor Jameson points out, a certificate as inspector in meat and other foods, then they must be assured that the salaries which they will receive as sanitary inspectors shall be at least as good as those which they may reasonably expect to obtain if they remain in the building crafts. The remedy lies in this direction rather than in lowering the educational standard.

OUR LEARNED BROTHERS.

"N3" writes: Dr. Herbert Spencer's story (November 17th, p. 915) of the American obstetrician who derived Caesarean section from *cedo cedere*, reminds me of the surprise I felt when "tactous eruditus" met my eye in (I think) the advertisement pages of a small medical periodical from across the Atlantic.

"HISTORY OF SCARLET FEVER."

DR. GORONWY JONES (Swansea) writes: In this article (November 24th, p. 926) I should like to point out one little error—that is, the date of the quotation from *Pepys' Diary*. In my copy of the *Journal* it is difficult to say whether it is 1654 or 1664. However, the correct date is November 10th, 1663.

AN ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR.

The Diary of Appointments for 1929, published by the Dental Manufacturing Company, Ltd. (1, Newman Street, W.1) is conveniently arranged and well produced. The pages are spaced for weekday engagements at quarter-hourly intervals from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and an address book is tucked into the end cover. Many medical practitioners, especially consultants, should find it just as useful as the dental surgeons for whom it is primarily intended. It can be had in various coloured bindings, and interleaved with blotting or ruled paper, at the price of 6s. 6d. or 8s., postage 6d. extra.

DISCLAIMER.

DR. STELLA CHURCHILL writes disclaiming responsibility for the use of her name in connexion with an advertisement of a brand of india-rubber hot-water bottle.

VACANCIES.

NOTIFICATIONS of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 74, 75, 76, 77, 80, and 81 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 78 and 79.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 243.