

MEDICAL MATTERS.**PROPRIETARY MEDICINES.**

1. The object of the Proprietary Medicines Bill, introduced by Viscount Astor in the House of Lords, as set forth in the Memorandum to the Bill, is to give effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Patent Medicines, who reported in August, 1914, *see* Paper 414 of 1914. It contains no provisions which were not specifically recommended by the Select Committee, and it includes all their more important recommendations so far as they fall within the province of the Ministry of Health.

2. Provision is made for the establishment of a register of proprietary medicines and appliances, and of the owners thereof, and the Bill prohibits the sale of any unregistered proprietary medicine or appliance.

The expression "proprietary medicine" is defined in the Bill to mean a medicine which is held out by advertisement as of use for curative or remedial purposes, and which is either sold under a trade name or manufactured by a secret process.

Severe penalties are attached to the unauthorised disclosure by the registrar or any other person of the formula of any registered medicine.

3. The sale of remedies purporting to cure certain diseases, such as consumption or cancer, is prohibited, and it is made an offence to advertise any article in terms which suggest that it can be used to produce abortion.

4. The Minister of Health is empowered to remove from the register any injurious medicine or appliance, but the owner is given a right of appeal to the High Court.

5. The Bill, in accordance with the recommendations of the Select Committee, prohibits certain practices, chiefly in connection with advertisements, which the Committee considered undesirable.

6. All regulations made under the Bill are required to be laid before Parliament.

After the expiration of six months from the commencement of this Act, it shall not be lawful for any person to sell, or to offer or advertise for sale, any medicine or surgical appliance of any kind whatsoever purporting or stating directly or by implication to be effective for the cure of deafness or rupture or for the prevention, cure, or relief of any of the diseases or infirmities mentioned in the Schedule to this Act.

(These are cancer, consumption, lupus, fits, epilepsy, amenorrhœa and other diseases peculiar to women, diabetes, paralysis, locomotor ataxy, and Bright's disease.)

If the Minister is of opinion that the provisions of this sub-section should extend to any other disease or infirmity, he may, by regulations under this Act, add the name of that disease or infirmity to the Schedule to this Act: No person shall print, publish or distribute, or be concerned in any manner in the printing, publication or distribution of, any advertisement or communication relating to any article expressed in such terms as may, or are likely or calculated to, suggest that the article may be used or may operate as a means of producing an abortion or miscarriage.

If any person acts in contravention of this section he shall be guilty of a misdemeanour.

FLEAS AND SCARLET FEVER.

Dr. Hamer, Medical Officer of Health for London, is investigating the relationship which he is of opinion exists between fleas and scarlet fever. It is too early yet to draw definite conclusions, but the "flea curve" and the scarlet fever curve show marked similarity.

The flea incidence is calculated on the percentage of flea-marked beds found in common lodging-houses (the mean being 29 per cent.), and the percentage of school-children found to be bitten (the mean being 20 per cent.). Dr. Hamer has pursued this investigation for some years, and it was found that in 1913, 1914, and 1915 there was a sharp rise in the flea curve and a similar one in the scarlet fever curve. In 1916, on the other hand, the flea curve rose slightly and the scarlet fever curve fell slightly. If it is definitely established that scarlet fever is conveyed by fleas, yet another disease will be added to those which are insect borne, and a systematic war on fleas will be an important plank in preventive nursing.

HOME TREATMENT FOR GONORRHEA.

Most doctors agree that vaginal douching in unskilled hands is not satisfactory, but there are cases where distance or other circumstances makes daily attendance at a clinic impossible, and a second-best method has to be resorted to.

The Higginson's syringe is the cheapest article on the market, but there are two objections to this: (1) Too much force is apt to be used; (2) The valves are liable to get out of order. At the cost of 5s. 6d. a "rotunda" syringe, Starcross brand, with a glass nozzle and celluloid jug-arch attached—which, although started by means of a bulb, works by syphonage—is now procurable.

Sisters of V.D. Departments, when home-douching is prescribed, are recommended to arrange with their dispensers to sell these to patients at cost price.

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