

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

FURTHER MEMORANDUM ON CANCER AS A SUBJECT FOR THE ATTENTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

The Minister of Health has issued a supplementary Memorandum to Local Authorities to that issued in July, 1930, which contained some suggestions as to ways in which such Authorities might participate in the present widespread efforts to reduce the mortality rate, and to relieve suffering, due to malignant disease.

The recent Memorandum states that the work of the National Radium Trust and the Radium Commission has advanced to a stage which renders it desirable that Local Authorities should be fully acquainted with the additional facilities for the radium treatment of cancer patients which are now available, and the chief object of this memorandum is to indicate how those facilities are distributed in Great Britain and the way in which they can be made available for suitable patients under the care of Local Authorities.

It may be recalled that the main functions of the Trust are to take charge of the funds which were raised by public subscription and voted by Parliament for the purchase of radium, and to arrange for the purchase of radium therewith; while those of the Commission are to secure the equitable distribution and full use of the radium which may from time to time be the property of the Trust with the object of promoting the treatment of the sick throughout Great Britain and the advancement of knowledge of the best methods of rendering such treatment.

In pursuance of these objects the Radium Commission decided at the outset on a policy of concentration of radium therapy at certain hospital centres nominated by the medical faculty of the local University, taking the view that in the present state of knowledge of radiotherapy a wider distribution of national radium would be highly undesirable. Thus the Commission has secured the establishment of national radium centres in provincial voluntary hospitals in England and Wales as follows:—

England—Birmingham General Hospital, Bristol Royal Infirmary, Leeds, The General Infirmary, Liverpool Royal Infirmary, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Royal Victoria Infirmary, Sheffield Royal Infirmary.

Wales—Cardiff Royal Infirmary.

It is understood, however, that as these centres (which are all associated with local Medical Schools) are somewhat unevenly distributed, the Commission has in mind the establishment of a number of smaller regional centres, chiefly to meet the needs of the East Anglian and South-Western districts.

By this organisation, supplemented by arrangements for the distribution of radium emanation (Radon), as detailed in Appendix IX of the First Annual Report of the Radium Commission, means have been supplied for the provision of radium treatment (and, in most centres, of X-ray treatment) for the cancer patients of considerable areas in Great Britain.

As part of their agreements with the Radium Commission for loans of radium the hospitals mentioned undertake:—

To organise the use of the radium so that the maximum practicable number of cancer patients may be treated, and to regard this as a primary obligation;

To set aside and maintain for the use of patients undergoing treatment by radium as many beds as will be necessary to keep it fully employed, not more than 20 per cent. being private (paying) patients;

To accept and to treat suitable and properly accredited patients from any source, including such as come from rate-aided institutions; the selection of patients to be left to the discretion of the hospital guided by the principle that the need and suitability of the patient for radium treatment shall be the sole determining factors in selection; and

To keep full records (including follow-up) of cases.

The system of concentration of radium therapy in recognised centres requires that each centre shall serve the needs of a large area and that arrangements shall be devised whereby patients within the area may, on the initiative of their medical attendants or the staffs of local hospitals, receive the requisite advice or treatment at the centre.

THE ANTI-CANCER LEAGUE.

The British Empire Cancer Campaign, of which the Duke of York is President, has inaugurated the Anti-Cancer Education League which is being organised and directed from the Mount Vernon Hospital. Speaking at the opening meeting at Windsor on this dread disease, Dr. Malcolm Donaldson said it was the policy of the campaign to form as many branches as possible, the intention being to have one in every town. The records of the Ministry of Health showed that only half the patients with cancer sought advice and treatment at a curable stage. It was impossible to teach people symptoms, the only practical method was to visit a doctor.

Dr. Donaldson said cancer was being treated in three ways, according to its nature and situation, and the stage at which it was found: (1) by radium; (2) by operation; (3) by X-rays. How far these agencies—which had been very intensively studied—would lessen the scourge depended in large degree, he said, on the public themselves. Workers were also divisible into three groups: (1) those working on the cause of cancer; (2) those concerned with the best treatment of it; (3) those seeking the most certain means of early recognition. He gave examples of various forms of cancer, practically all traceable to chronic and long-continued irritation, such as cancer of the tongue due to a jagged tooth.

Dr. R. G. Canti showed a film to illustrate the division and multiplication of cancer and other cells and the effect of radium on them.

Simple instruction and illustration by film throughout the country, such as is proposed by the Anti-Cancer League, should have a most helpful result, and we hope members of the nursing profession will take an active part in its simple propaganda; well do they know the greivous ravages of this insidious disease.

BATS AS CARRIERS OF RABIES.

The Trinidad Government, reports *The Times* correspondent, has voted £200 as an honorarium to Dr. Pawan, who proved that bats were the carriers in the recent outbreak of rabies in the colony. Mr. Grier, the Government spokesman, declared that the amount hardly covered Dr. Pawan's expenses, but it was an acknowledgment of his great work. Dr. Pawan, he said, had sacrificed his health through overwork in his efforts to discover the origin of the disease.

Dr. Pawan is the Trinidad Government bacteriologist. The disease, which he has traced to bats as carriers, for a time baffled investigators, who ascribed the deaths caused by it to a "virus of rabies of a hitherto unknown type." In a report to the Trinidad Government last November the suggestion was made that bats were the carriers. This was later confirmed by Dr. Pawan, who found the typical signs of rabies in the brain of a *Sangre grande* bat.

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