THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

BACTERIA IN SWIMMING BATHS.

Investigations are being made by an assistant of the Bacteriological Department of St. Mary's Hospital, London, as reported in *The Times*, into the purification and disinfection of the water in swimming baths. The experiments have been going on since June and will probably last until next summer.

The objects of the research are to find a substitute for the treatment of water by chlorine and to fix a standard of purity similar to that recognised for milk and drinking water. The system employed at present in the new bath of the Medical School makes use of a filter and ultra-violet rays. The bath has eight inlets and two outlets. The water is kept in continual circulation by an electric pump, and the contents of the bath, 56,000 gallons, can be circulated in less than four hours. A system of pipes carries the water to a large filter of the ordinary type, then through an aerator, which freshens it, and it finally passes through two containers with ray tubes. It has been found that bacteria which can pass through the filters are often killed by the effect of the ultra-violet rays. Treated in this way the water remains sweet and need not be changed. The water at present in the bath has been there for three months, yet it is so clear that a No. 19 gauge pin can be seen through 7 ft. of the water.

It has been observed that when the circulation system is not in use there is a large increase in the number of bacteria in the water. An experiment was made one week-end when the bath was not in use. The system was stopped on Friday and restarted on Monday at 8 a.m. By midday the number of bacteria per cubic centimetre had been reduced from 17,520 to 3,226, and by 3 p.m. was down to 2,000. Taps have been attached to the pipes through which samples of the water may be taken at different stages of the process, and graphs are being kept of the variations in purity of the water.

The system has been tried for the water supply in Marseilles and in several private baths in America. It is still, however, in the experimental stage.

MEAT INSPECTION.

At the Annual Conference of the Sanitary Inspectors' Association held recently at Clacton-on-Sea Mr. J. D. Allan, Chief Food Inspector for Liverpool, introducing the subject of meat inspection, said that the general public were taking an increased interest in the foodstuffs which they bought and used. Confidence had been instilled in the minds of the public with regard to food, but although great progress had been made under the supervision of medical officers and meat inspectors the subject had not received sufficient support from the veterinary profession.

Thirty per cent. of the cows killed under his supervision last year were tuberculous. That was a serious position, because having dealt with the meat to prevent its consumption he wondered what had happened to the thousands of gallons of milk that those animals had produced. When it was considered that the percentage was just as alarming 25 years ago it would have been expected that veterinary science would in that period have effected some diminution.

A large proportion of disease conditions found in cattle at present was preventible and could be minimised if the cattle were kept under suitable and healthy conditions and subjected to systematic veterinary examination. It was the duty of every local authority to take every precaution to ensure healthy living animals as well as efficient *post-mortem* examination of animals slaughtered for human food.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF CONTROL.

The Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Control (of which the Chairman is Mr. L. G. Brock, C.B.) Part I of which has just been published, has some useful comments on the subject of dietary. It reports that one of the duties of every Commissioner when visiting a Mental Hospital is to inspect the feeding arrangements, and it is satisfactory to record that the dietary is, in the great majority of cases, good and varied and the cost commendably low. But there are still a few hospitals which work on a weekly dietary, instead of the more usual three weeks' programme, with the result that the patients soon learn what dishes to expect on any given day of the week. There is no economy in this monotonous dietary, and if for any reason it is not found practicable to adopt the three weeks' plan the Board suggest as an alternative the introduction of an occasional "surprise" dish, which has been tried with success in several hospitals. The most popular dish, they say, tends to pall when it is known that it will re-appear on the same day of the week for fifty-two weeks in the year. An element of uncertainty is an aid to appetite. While the food is almost universally good and abundant, there are still too many hospitals where excellent material and cooking are spoilt by want of a little care in serving the dinner reasonably hot.

In regard to dress it is recorded that the fact that women commissioners can now take part in Statutory Visits has resulted in greater attention being paid to the clothing of the female patients. Anything which helps to restore a patient's self respect is an aid to recovery, and in these days when attractive clothes can be produced cheaply there is no longer any excuse for the ugliness of many of the garments which used to be turned out in some hospital workrooms.

MEDICAL VALUE OF PINEAPPLE.

Canned pineapple may become a powerful ally to doctors and dentists in their fight against pyorrhœa, according to a report by Dr. J. A. Killian, the distinguished American scientist, on the Nutritional Value of Canned Pineapple, which has just been published in the U.S.A.

This report, which is the result of two years' research at the University of Hawaii, has, amongst other things, established canned pineapple as one of the most consistently reliable anti-scorbutics available throughout the seasons. Dr. Hanke, of the University of Chicago, states the report, has found, during an intensive study of dental disease and diet, that many striking cures of pyorrhœa and dental decay have been effected by the consumption of large quantities of anti-scorbutics which are rich in vitamin C. Canned pineapple, it has been established, has as high a vitamin C content as the anti-scorbutics used in Dr. Hanke's experiments, and has also a high content of vitamins A, B, D and G. In experiments undertaken in connection with the Indian disease, Beri-beri, which is a nutritional disorder, canned pineapple was found to contain the vitamin B (B 1) in sufficient quantities to prove very valuable in combating the disease.

Canned pineapple, the report adds, was found to be a good source of iron, copper and manganese, essential to a proper diet, in a readily assimilable form. Test meals were given to a large number of subjects, and it was found that the incorporation of pineapple in the meal stimulated the protease activity in the stomach, and definitely speeded up the digestive process.

While the vitamin content of fresh vegetables varied very considerably with the season of the year, the report adds, the vitamin content of pineapple was not injured by canning, and maintained a consistent level throughout the seasons.

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