

## THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

### MOSQUITO DAY.

August 20th, now known as Mosquito Day, was so named by Sir Ronald Ross, who on that day in 1897 discovered the germs of malaria in the tissues of a mosquito, thus proving scientifically the theory of Sir Patrick Manson that the mosquito was the conveyer of malaria to the human subject. Since that time some 2,000 species of the mosquito have been classified, although only about 30 are known in this country.

Since Ross in India, and Grassi in Italy, carried out their first experiments much, says a contemporary, has been done to combat the pest scientifically. In Italy Signor Mussolini has turned the unemployed on to vast schemes for drainage and eucalyptus planting in the Campagna round Rome, and in America the mosquito is being fought with Paris green sprayed from aeroplanes.

The mosquito is perhaps at its most terrible in sparsely inhabited places. In Greenland and the Arctic mosquitoes make up for the scarcity of human blood by attacking their victims in vicious swarms.

### THE EPILEPSIES.

At the International Neurological Congress held recently in the Great Hall of University College under the presidency of Dr. Gordon Holmes, an interesting discussion took place on "The Epilepsies."

As reported by the medical correspondent of *The Times*, the view was expressed by Professor Abadie (Bordeaux) that epilepsy is neither constitutional nor a hereditary disease, but is personal and acquired in the sense that each case had its origin in some accident. The most frequent causes, in the view of the speaker, were injuries to the brain, suffered during the process of birth, injuries occurring in infancy as the result of falls and other accidents; and injuries following infections of the brain in infancy. Among these causes the speaker placed the injuries at birth in the first place.

This view was not endorsed by Professor Buscaino (Catania), who spoke about the hereditary factor in epilepsy. There existed, in his opinion, a special liability to epilepsy which was found only in a few individuals. He classified the causes as predisposing, preparatory, adjuvant, and exciting.

Dr. Lennox (Boston) discussed the bio-chemical changes met with during epileptic seizures, and went on to describe methods of treatment based upon these observations. He distinguished sharply between the two forms of epilepsy known, respectively, as "grand" and "petit mal." The effect of changing the oxygen supply of the patient, for example, was different in the two types. Thus out of 20 cases of grand mal who were made unconscious by treatment only one experienced his usual seizure. Seizures were regularly and consistently induced by the same treatment in 13 patients with petit mal.

### DIESEL ENGINED BUSES FOR LONDON.

The London Passenger Transport Board have announced their intention to gradually replace their petrol-driven omnibuses with Diesel-engined vehicles. This means that in ten years' time all London omnibuses will be Diesel driven. At present there are 850 of this type.

One great advantage of Diesel-engined omnibuses in London will be the lessening of carbon monoxide fumes, which the present petrol engines dispense lavishly.

### TULIP FINGERS.

A writer in the *British Medical Journal* describes a disease known as "Tulip Fingers" which affects great numbers of the packers of these flowers. A great authority on bulbs

in this country stated to a contemporary that he had been observing cases of this disease for 40 years. The employes of his firm (some 250 pickers) handle several millions of daffodils, several millions of tulips, and at least a million hyacinth bulbs annually in the Spalding district. Many of them enjoy complete immunity from the disease, which is characterised by little sores under the nails, causing intense irritation, and the nails become brittle and break easily. A local ointment, in use for many years, appeared to act as a preventive and to afford relief, but now the pickers are provided by the firm with rubber gloves. They are stated to wear very well and to be perfectly reliable safeguards against "tulip fingers."

### HEALTH CHIEF.

Signor Mussolini has appointed Sir Aldo Castellani, the well-known Harley Street specialist on tropical diseases, to be health consultant in East Africa.

This means, says Reuter, that he will be in charge of the health of the whole civil and military population.

Sir Aldo Castellani is a lecturer at the London School of Tropical Medicine. During the war he was lieutenant-colonel in the Royal Italian Medical Service (Balkan Zone, 1915-18) and a member of the Inter-Allied Sanitary Commission.

In 1902-3 he was a member of the Foreign Office and Royal Society's Commission on Sleeping Sickness in Uganda and he is chiefly known for his work in connection with tropical diseases.

He has recently been experimenting in types of topees (sun helmets) in Italy.

He is now giving lectures in Rome to Italian officers of the Medical Service who are due to leave for East Africa.

### THE RETURN OF THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL.

In Great Britain and Ireland 183,712 births and 144,153 deaths were registered in the three months ended December 31st, 1934. The increase of population owing to the excess of births over deaths was therefore 39,559. The number of persons married was 208,380. In the three months ended March 31st, 1935, there were 189,037 births and 168,703 deaths; the excess of births over deaths being 20,334. The number of persons married was 128,682.

### HEALTH IN OLD AGE.

The Friday talks in September of the British Broadcasting Corporation will deal with that particular problem with which so many of us are confronted—the health of the aged. In this short series, to be broadcast by a doctor, on "Health in Old Age," advice will be given not only for the benefit of the old people themselves, but also for those who have charge of them.

### SURGICAL DRESSING FROM WEEDS.

A new material that can be used in place of cotton wool for surgical dressings has been discovered in Siberia by a Russian doctor.

Algimine, as the material has been named, is made from a fibrous water-weed which grows in large quantities in certain Siberian lakes. It has been tested, we are informed, "with excellent results" in hospital practice.

### FIRST AID BY PARACHUTE.

Several doctors and nurses at the Botkinski Hospital in Moscow have pledged themselves to learn parachute jumping.

Their intention is to attend urgent medical cases in remote areas where there are no suitable landing places for aeroplanes.

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