

Medical officers of health are now reviewing the facilities available in their areas for cleansing. Where these are inadequate the necessary cost of making additional provision to meet the needs of persons attending public shelters will be reimbursed to the local authorities by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry is also taking steps to establish a supplementary service of mobile disinfecting units so far as supplies of necessary materials and labour permit. Quantities of the insecticides recommended have been ordered, and instructions for use, based on the results of trials, will be issued. The compulsory powers referred to have been obtained. The investigation of lice incidence will be extended as soon as methods and technique are further developed.

BUG INFESTATION.

- (i) In the construction of shelters, bunks, and other fittings measures should, as far as possible, be taken to avoid cracks, crevices, and other harbourages for insects. To this end the Committee suggests that the practicability of treating all internal walls with impermeable paint to render them impervious to bugs should be investigated.
- (ii) When a shelter is found to be infested the Committee suggests the adoption of the following method, which should result in a large measure of success, namely:—An organised system of cleaning and scrubbing and the liberal use of soap and water containing cresol. The use of a painter's blow-lamp carefully applied to all cracks, etc., is an excellent, simple method, which is generally applicable for small infestations.

Instructions on this matter are on the point of being issued to the authorities concerned.

CHEMICALS IN LATRINES.

In view of the need for economy, the Committee would point out that it is usually unnecessary to use disinfectants in latrine containers when these are being flushed or emptied frequently and regularly.

Instructions are being issued on this.

MASKS.

In response to a request from the Minister of Health the question of the use of masks by shelter users was submitted to an *ad hoc* Committee. Two representatives of the Medical Research Council were co-opted and have carried out helpful researches. The following tentative recommendations have been accepted by the main Committee. Meanwhile the researches referred to are being continued.

- (i) The principle of the mask for reducing the risk of droplet infection is sound and should be capable of practical application.
- (ii) It seems desirable to choose as a standard a type of mask that will best serve the dual purpose of reducing the spread of micro-organisms from an infected person, and, at the same time, of protecting as far as possible the uninfected person.

Bearing in mind the importance of availability of material, ease of adjustment to the face, and rapidity and thoroughness of disinfection, in addition to the main consideration of actual protection, a cellulose acetate (cellophane) screen, 5½ in. square supported by an elastic cord, is considered to be the best for standard purposes. A suitable number of such masks should be ordered so as to meet the arrival of any contingency. To obviate an unforeseen difficulty in the supply of cellophane masks of the gauze

type, consisting of at least four layers of muslin of at least 44 threads to the inch, should also be ordered.

- (iii) The yashmak type of mask, which some persons prefer to wear, and which is being commercialised, is regarded favourably by the Committee.
- (iv) A memorandum for the information of medical officers of health concerning the use of masks should be issued. A leaflet should also be prepared for issue to shelter users when the necessity arises.

Orders for large numbers of the types of masks recommended in sub-section (ii) above have been placed, and arrangements are being made whereby further supplies may be quickly obtained should the necessity arise. A memorandum and leaflet on the lines proposed in sub-section (iv) have been prepared.

LOZENGES, GARGLES, AND THROAT SPRAYS.

The Committee has considered the use of certain reputed prophylactic measures such as medicated lozenges, gargles, and throat sprays. From the evidence placed before it the Committee concludes that there are not sufficient grounds on which to recommend any of these methods as part of the general hygiene campaign against infection in shelters.

At the same time the Committee does not wish to discourage the use of these measures by individual shelter users. It does not, however, advise that these kinds of medicaments be included in the list of drugs supplied by Government.

SMOKING.

- (i) In the interests of public health, smoking should be prohibited in public shelters except where a separate compartment can be set aside for smokers.
- (ii) This prohibition does not, of course, apply to any form of domestic shelter or domestic communal shelter.
- (iii) Facilities for smoking can usually be provided in the brick surface public shelters by setting aside a compartment for the purpose.
- (iv) It is suggested that, in order to avoid confusion in the public mind, the different categories of shelter should be carefully explained to the Press if, and when, this recommendation is handed to them.

The Public Shelter Rules made under Regulation 23AB of the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, contain provisions enabling smoking to be prohibited or controlled according to circumstances.

The Committee (it is reported) is sponsoring certain controlled experiments with some of the newer forms of chemotherapeutic drugs, used as nose and throat sprays under medical supervision, and these are still in progress.

The White Paper states that the Committee has continued to meet frequently, and has been consulted regularly by the two Ministers. The medical officers of the Ministry of Health who were detached from other duties to assist the local authorities in these matters in collaboration with officers of the Ministry of Home Security are continuing their regular visits to the London shelters.

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STEEL HELMETS FOR NURSES.

It is announced by the Minister of Health that it has been decided that a further issue of Steel Helmets (Service type), Grade 2, or Civilian helmets (steel) shall be made for the use of Nursing Staffs billeted outside their hospitals, and who may be required to travel between the hospital and their billets during air raids.

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