

PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR THE HOSPITALS IN THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE.

The British Hospitals Association has issued a memorandum on personal support for hospitals in the National Health Service which has the concurrence of the Departments of Health for England and Wales and for Scotland.

It serves a most useful purpose in answering many questions in the minds of present hospital supporters and workers.

It emphasizes the need for continuance of personal interest in, and voluntary service for, the hospital patient.

Gifts can be given after July 5th to a particular hospital and will be retained by that hospital for its own particular use, thus preserving in the future that intimate association between hospital and supporter which is of such importance to both.

The memorandum gives many illustrations of the purposes for which gifts will be welcome, including medical research, amenities for the staff and patients, and supplementation in other appropriate ways of the resources of the hospitals to stimulate progress in medical treatment and in methods of hospital administration. The memorandum can be obtained from the Secretary, British Hospitals Association, 52, Green Street, London, W.1.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The Foreign Office states that:—

One case of typhus was reported from Dusseldorf in the fortnightly report just issued by Public Health Branch of the Control Commission for Germany (BE).

The victim was an illegal refugee woman, who came from the Soviet zone on October 26th, 1947. Fortunately the case was diagnosed early enough to prevent the disease from spreading.

The incidence of typhoid and paratyphoid continues to decline. There was an outbreak of paratyphoid in Salzvey, Kreis Euskirchen, Land North Rhine/Westphalia, and 29 cases were diagnosed. The source of infection was a baker's family. The shop has now been closed, and all necessary precautions taken.

In the British Sector of Berlin there has been a steady decline in the number of tuberculosis cases throughout the year 1947, and the latest monthly mortality rate is little more than half what it was in January, 1947.

The figures for venereal disease in the first two weeks of December showed little change in Laender Niedersachsen, North Rhine/Westphalia and Hansestadt Hamburg. In Land Schleswig Holstein, however, there was a sharp rise. The first meeting of the Zonal V.D. Inter-Service Committee was held in Lubbecke on December 14th, 1947.

Nutrition Survey in Hamburg.

A survey of public servants in Hamburg was made recently by No. 3 Nutrition Survey Team, as public servants reporting sick had reached 9.5 per cent. of all employees, it was stated by Public Health Branch of the Control Commission for Germany (BE).

The survey took place in the third week of the 108th ration period (November 23rd to 30th, 1947) and involved 367 office workers.

Of those examined 49.6 per cent. were found to be in a moderate state of nutrition, 29.7 per cent. in good condition, 20.7 per cent. in fair to poor condition. Loss of weight was noticeable, but there were few signs of vitaminosis or actual malnutrition. No cases of hunger oedema were found, but about 3 per cent. had suffered from it. There were also no cases of open tuberculosis, but 7 per cent. were under observation at their local Fürsorgestellen either as healed or suspected cases.

More than three-quarters of those seen were normal consumers, but extra food was obtained illegally by 84 per cent.

UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT TESTS NEW WONDER DRUG.

The U.S. Army Medical Department soon will stage the most extensive test yet made of the efficacy of chloromycetin, the only drug thus far discovered which is as effective against certain rickettsial disease-causing organisms as the sulfa drugs and penicillin are effective against bacteria. The test will be made in an effort to stop the spread of the dreaded scrub typhus in the Far East.

Dr. J. E. Smadel, director of virus research at the Army Medical Center, and one of the discoverers of this substance which may mark one of the important landmarks in the history of medicine, plans to fly to the Malay States early this Spring with a supply of the drug for the treatment of native plantation workers among whom scrub typhus is making serious inroads.

The carrier of the infection is a mite which is probably spread by rodents. During the war many of the plantations in Malaya were allowed to go back to brush. This resulted in a big population of infested rodents. Workers sent in to clear the plantations have suffered a heavy mortality rate.

The early experiments at the Army Medical Research and Graduate School showed that chloromycetin was specially effective against the micro-organism responsible for scrub typhus, which is also known as rickettsial tsutsugamushi and as "Japanese River Fever." This organism is related to the organism responsible for epidemic typhus and causes a quite similar disease, but typhus vaccine has proved useless as a protection against scrub typhus.

The new drug showed considerable potency against both typhus and scrub typhus organisms in experimental infections of incubated eggs and in animals. It also proved effective against several other maladies due to rickettsia, the still mysterious organisms which find a place between bacteria and the filterable viruses, tiniest of living things which are responsible for such maladies as influenza and poliomyelitis.

Experience has shown, however, that laboratory results do not always work out in the field. Dr. Smadel has just returned to Washington from Mexico City where the new drug was tested against a small outbreak of typhus fever. The Army is not yet ready to announce the results. The proposed attack on scrub typhus is considered of even greater importance since this malady has proved difficult to treat in any known way and existing vaccines are not adequate in their protection.

The outlook is quite promising, according to the Surgeon General. At least a start has been made on specific drug treatment of the large class of rickettsial diseases which are responsible for some of the most devastating scourges of the human race. It has even been found to be mildly effective against one virus disease, psittacosis, and the door may have been opened to attack on most of these maladies. The psittacosis organism, however, is one of the largest of the viruses and just falls short of being classified as a rickettsia.

Scrub typhus was a major army problem in the Pacific during the war and the story of its ravages is extremely dramatic. Efforts to produce a vaccine against it cost the lives of three American and several British workers. Nothing was accomplished until the war was nearly over. An apparently effective vaccine finally was prepared from the macerated lungs and spleens of infected rodents but when this was given actual field tests it was found to be ineffective.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)