

SIR,—I venture to suggest that the strictly legitimate reply to this last monstrous imposition upon dispensing panel doctors is to give notice to their Insurance Committees that, if they do not repudiate the absurd contention of the Commission, the doctor will cease altogether to dispense. It will then become the duty of the Insurance Committees to provide chemists for nearly every large village, and of the chemists to supply every costly remedy out of the drug fund.—I am, etc.,

Chichester, July 21st.

G. C. GARRATT.

A NOTE ON EPIDEMICS.

SIR,—It seems to me that the epidemic disease described by Dr. Burnford differs in some important respects from glandular fever. The few cases I have seen corresponded exactly with the description given by Dawson Williams (*Encyclopaedia Medica*, first edition, vol. iv, p. 156). The more important points of difference are briefly as follows: In glandular fever the first symptom is generally pain and stiffness of the neck, and in many cases there is pain in the abdomen. After two or three days an oval swelling (glandular) appears under the edge of the sterno-mastoid muscle, almost invariably on the left side, followed in a day or two by a similar swelling on the right side and a generalized adenitis. The symptoms generally last about a fortnight. In all my cases abdominal pain was marked, and in the first case caused some anxiety till the typical swelling appeared. The symptoms, of course, may be modified in adults.—I am, etc.,

Thornhill, July 21st.

M. BRYSON, M.B.

Medico-Legal.

THE COVENTRY CASE.

Pratt and Others v. the British Medical Association and Others.

IN the King's Bench Division on July 15th, before Mr. Justice McCardie, the hearing was begun of an action by Dr. Ernest Camden Pratt, Dr. David Holmes, Dr. Andrew St. Lawrence-Burke, and Dr. Charles Hodge Cairns, registered practitioners of Coventry, against the British Medical Association, and Drs. William H. Lowman, William J. Pickup, John Orton, and Thomas Webb Fowler, registered medical practitioners of Coventry, and members of the Coventry Division of the British Medical Association. The plaintiffs claimed damages for alleged conspiracy to injure them in their profession, and to libel and slander them, and for alleged libels and slanders. The allegations were denied. For the preliminary particulars here briefly given we are indebted to the *Times* Law Reports.

Mr. Schwabe, K.C., and Sir Hugh Fraser appeared for the plaintiffs; Mr. McCall, K.C., Mr. Hollis Walker, K.C., and Mr. A. Neilson, instructed by Messrs. Hempton, solicitors, appeared for the defendants. Counsel stated, in opening the case, that since the proceedings had begun Dr. Cairns, one of the plaintiffs, had died. The libels alleged charged the plaintiffs with conduct detrimental to the honour and interests of the profession in carrying on a dispensary in Coventry. It was alleged that the dispensary was conducted on principles fundamentally opposed to those approved of by the Coventry Division of the British Medical Association in the following respects: (1) The absence of a maximum wage limit upon the patients treated; (2) the administration was under lay control; (3) the members accepted unnecessarily low rates of subscription; (4) a dispensary conducted under these conditions stood in the way of any betterment of local contract practice conditions. The defendants pleaded that the occasion was privileged.

The first two days of the hearing were given up to the opening address for the plaintiffs by Mr. Schwabe, which was concluded on July 17th, when Dr. St. Lawrence-Burke gave evidence and was cross-examined by Mr. McCall. On July 18th the evidence of Dr. Holmes and Dr. Pratt was taken, and several lay witnesses from Coventry were heard. On July 19th Mr. Farren, for many years honorary secretary and collector to the dispensary committee at Coventry, and Mr. Gray, for more than forty years a member of the committee, gave evidence.

The hearing was resumed on July 22nd, when Mr. McCall, in his opening address for the defence, submitted that (1) there was no illegal conspiracy, (2) there was no defamation, either in the way of libel or slander, and (3) if there were, all the publications, including the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, were privileged. Moreover, no express malice had been shown; and, finally, the suggested agency of each defendant for the others was unfounded. The charge against the British Medical Association failed, as it was against a corporation.

In the course of the legal argument, Mr. Justice McCardie said that the real question was as to the permissible limits of quasi-coercive action. It was, he said, a matter that touched

all professions and trades. Later he asked how the case differed from that where a labour leader says to an employer, "If you continue to employ that man, I will call out the union men." To this Mr. McCall replied: "There is a great distinction between a trade-union leader, who has wide powers over the members of the trade union, when he says to an employer that he will use the power of the trade union to call out the men, whether they wish it or not, and a number of medical men who say to another medical man, 'If you continue to be associated with this institution, which we object to, we shall refuse to meet you; this is a question of loyalty to professional interest and honour, and we invite all our members to agree with us in that policy.'" There was nothing illegal in that.

Dr. Alfred Cox, Medical Secretary of the British Medical Association, gave evidence on July 22nd and 23rd, describing the machinery of the Association and the circumstances that led to the action, and evidence was also given by Dr. James Neal, Deputy Medical Secretary.

The hearing of the action had not been concluded at the time of our going to press.

Universities and Colleges.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

THE following candidates have been approved at the examination indicated:

M.D.—Branch I, *Medicine*: A. J. Eagleton, I. H. Pearse, W. N. Pickles, G. F. Rodrigues. Branch VI, *Tropical Medicine*: R. Y. Stones.

LONDON HOSPITAL MEDICAL COLLEGE.

The following awards have been made: Medical Prize, £20, S. N. Sennett; Honorary Certificates, E. Miller, A. B. K. Watkins. Obstetric Prize, £20, J. C. Ryder Richardson; Honorary Certificate, J. Fanning. Andrew Clark Prize in Clinical Medicine and Pathology, £26, A. B. K. Watkins; Honorary Certificates, S. N. Sennett, E. Miller. Sutton Prize, £20, A. B. K. Watkins. Anderson Prizes in Elementary Clinical Medicine, £3, M. C. Hartley, R. A. Madgwick; Honorary Certificates, A. R. Crane, J. J. Coghlan. Prizes in Elementary Clinical Surgery, £5, E. L. Sergeant, M. Marcus, M. C. Hartley; and F. F. Langridge and C. W. Tomkinson equal (prize divided). Letheby Prize in Organic Chemistry, £10, S. Sandler.

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

THE following degrees were conferred on July 20th:

M.B., CH.B.—*J. G. Harrower, *W. R. D. Hamilton, †M. Hyman, †Margharita M. L. Couper, C. O. Anderson, Ellen D. Anderson, J. D. Arthur, W. Barras, D. C. Bowie, W. G. Burns, M. J. Cahalane, H. A. Cochrane, E. M. E. Cumming, J. F. Cunningham, A. M. Davidson, A. B. S. Drysdale, W. Edgar, D. Finlayson, Grace A. Fleming, G. Gordon, A. S. Goudie, Jane E. Hanson, Lillias B. Hardie, A. Henderson, J. Irving, R. P. Jack, J. C. Laurie, J. Lipsey, A. J. Macartney, D. MacCull, Isabella Q. M'Fadzean, T. M'Gowan, J. W. Mackay, A. A. M'Laughland, D. Maclean, W. R. M'Linden, F. K. Macmillan, J. M. Melvin, Florence F. M. Milne, W. Napier, B. F. Niblock, Elizabeth P. Y. Paterson, N. B. Peacock, R. J. Peters, J. B. Potter, Rahmat Ullah Qureshi, W. Scotland, Katherine Scott, Margaret M. C. Steedman, J. A. Walls, T. M'S. Wilson, G. M. Wishart.

*With honours.

†With commendation.

The principal, Sir Donald MacAlister, who performed the capping ceremony, conveyed the congratulations of the Senate to the recipients of the degrees, and to the large majority of the men who had offered themselves for the service of the country in its need he wished God-speed and all honour.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH.

THE following candidates having passed the requisite examinations have been admitted Fellows:

C. H. B. Avarne, F. B. Craig, W. R. Higgins, E. W. Kirk, D. Lees, L. N. Morris, F. L. Spalding, K. V. Trubshaw, A. S. Wilson.

Obituary.

THE sudden death of Dr. JOHN JAMES COWAN, while on holiday at Tenby, on July 1st, has deprived Malvern of a well-known and greatly respected practitioner. He was the son of the late Inspector-General Michael W. Cowan, M.D. After graduating M.B., C.M. in 1890 at Edinburgh, he spent five years as assistant medical officer to the Roxburgh District Asylum, Melrose. During the past twenty-four years he practised in Malvern and the adjacent country, and for the last ten years was honorary surgeon to the Malvern General Hospital. In 1915 he founded the Malvern Royal Naval Convalescent Hospital for the sick and wounded of all Admiralty ratings. Dr. Cowan's skill as a surgeon, sound judgement, sterling character, and cheery disposition will long be remembered by many in the district.