be to raise a culture from a single cell. Such a method was introduced by Burri in which Indian ink is used as a dark ground for the bacteria. This particular method, however, is open to certain objections, one of which is the risk of contamination owing to the necessary exposure of the glass slips. Moreover, such a method demands considerable time and skill, the latter of which is not acquired in a day. Where time is a matter of some moment I would suggest the following alternative:—

An isolated colony or part of such a colony is picked off from the solid medium with a platinum needle, and a suspension of this material is made in one or two c.c. of sterile saline. An old colony is perhaps preferable where there is practically nothing left but spores. After vigorous shaking a sample of this suspension is transferred to a hæmocyto-meter stage, or preferably to a counting chamber such as has been devised by Professor Ernest Glynn for the numerical estimation of bacteria in vaccines. Having ascertained the number of spores or bacilli per c.c. in the suspension, it is an easy matter to make from this a dilution which will contain approximately one spore or one bacillus per unit of saline. When the desired dilution has been obtained, it is an easy matter to sow a series of meat or Hirsch tubes each with the unit volume of saline containing a single organism or spore. These are then incubated anaerobically, and thereafter examined as to their purity. If a sufficiently high dilution has been made there is every probability that a pure strain or strains will be secured.

The method is simple, does not take up much time, reduces the possibility of extraneous contamination to a minimum, and, short of raising a culture from a guaranteed single bacillus, as the ideal method would be, offers a very reasonable prospect of success.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

ROBERT DONALDSON,
Reading, May 20th, 1917. Pathologist, Royal Berks Hospital.

THE BELGIAN DOCTORS' AND PHARMACISTS' RELIEF FUND.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In spite of the fact that a circular has been issued stating that the "National Committee for Relief in Belgium" is ceasing to take part in the relief of the suffering in Belgium, this Committee (The Belgian Doctors' and Pharmacists' Relief Fund), as the result of a letter received from "The Commission for Relief in Belgium," has decided to continue to send £800 a month to the Committee in Brussels. The letter contained the following words:—

"Every arrangement has been made to assure that the relief shall go on without interruption. Spanish and Dutch representatives will take the place of the Americans, and the actual handling of the relief cargoes, the distribution of money, &c., will be supervised by Belgian representatives of the Commission in a way which we feel confident will ensure the food and funds arriving at their proper destination. I therefore hope that you will be able to continue the contributions from your society as in the past. They have afforded great relief."

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

H. A. DES VŒUX,
Honorary Treasurer.
14, Buckingham-gate, London, S.W. 1, May 23rd, 1917.

THE EXAMINATION OF THE BLOOD OF TYPHUS FEVER CASES BY DARK-GROUND ILLUMINATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A few days after the publication of the letter sent to you by Dr. Georgina Darling and myself,¹ the examination of a large number of "controls" demonstrated that the spirochæte-like bodies found in the blood of typhus fever cases were also present in the blood of other patients, and even in that of healthy subjects. I am therefore in entire agreement with the remarks of Lieutenant-Colonel L. W. Harrison, R.A.M.C., in his letter of April 29th. I think Colonel Harrison has done good service in describing these "streamers," and in this way preventing others being deceived by them. I would have written earlier, but my sudden departure overseas prevented me.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

B. E. T., May 20th, 1917. W. JAMES WILSON,
Captain, R.A.M.C. (T.F.).

¹ THE LANCET, April 14th, 1917, p. 589.

Parliamentary Intelligence.

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

Appeal Pensions Tribunal.

THE two medical representatives on the tribunal which is to hear appeals from decisions awarding gratuities to sailors and soldiers discharged as medically unfit are Mr. BILTON POLLARD, of the Royal College of Surgeons, and Dr. NORMAN MOORE, of the Royal College of Physicians.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16TH.

Medical Re-examinations.

Answering Mr. NEEDHAM, Mr. MACPHERSON (Under Secretary for War) said: Owing to the very great pressure on the medical boards it is impossible to set up at present a system of anticipatory medical examinations in connexion with the Military Service (Review of Exceptions) Act. It is hoped, however, as soon as may be, to afford facilities for men who desire to be medically examined in advance of the date on which, under the Act, they would be liable to be called up for re-examination, and where under such authorised anticipatory medical examination a man is found to be permanently and totally disabled for military service he will receive a final discharge in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

In reply to Mr. PENNEFATHER, Mr. MACPHERSON said: The Military Service (Review of Exceptions) Act, 1917, expressly defines the limits within which notices requiring re-examination are sent to discharged sailors and soldiers. In order to avoid error, the form of notice bears on the face of it a statement that it does not apply to any officer or man who has left or been discharged from the naval or military service of the Crown in consequence of disablement, if the disablement has been certified under the authority of the Admiralty or of the Army Council to be the result of wounds, including injury from poisonous gas, received in battle or in any engagement with the enemy or otherwise from the enemy, or in consequence of neurasthenia or any allied functional nerve disease, if so certified by a special medical board to be the result of naval or military service in the present war. For a man who considers that he falls within this exclusion a form of claim is printed on the back of the notice, which is to be returned to the recruiting officer in order that inquiries may be made.

THURSDAY, MAY 17TH.

Medical Examination of Female Prisoners.

Commander WEDGWOOD asked the Home Secretary what further steps had been taken in investigation of the Brentford case; and whether the magistrate who ordered the medical examination of two innocent women was still administering justice in the Brentford district.—Sir GEORGE CAVE replied: I have made inquiries into this case, and am informed that the magistrates did not order an examination of the two women referred to. The women were charged with disorderly behaviour, and the magistrates, after hearing part of the evidence, remanded them for inquiries, and endorsed upon the committal order a statement that the justices would be obliged by the opinion of the medical officer as to whether the women were suffering from disease. I have informed the magistrates that in my opinion this request should not have been made. In consequence of the magistrates' request the two women were medically examined at Holloway Prison, with the result that they were reported by the deputy medical officer to be free from disease. The prison medical officers have definite instructions that no woman is to be examined without her consent, and I am assured that in this case the necessary consents were obtained. On the hearing of the case being resumed, the magistrates dismissed the charge. It appears from the information given to me that no illegality was committed, but I desire to repeat that in my opinion there was no reason whatever why the magistrates should have asked for any opinion from the medical officer and I regret that the request was made.

Mr. LEIF JONES: Are prisoners made aware that they may refuse their consent to such examination?—Sir GEORGE CAVE: I understand that they are always told they may refuse.

Prisoners and Venereal Disease.

Answering Commander WEDGWOOD, who asked whether in a certain prison girls due for discharge were obliged to submit to a medical examination, and if found suffering from venereal disease were detained beyond their sentence, Sir GEORGE CAVE said: Under Statutory Rule 11 all prisoners must be examined before discharge. No prisoner is locally examined for venereal disease without consent. No prisoner