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THE PRESENT DAY PLIGHT OF PETROGRAD PHYSICIANS.

THE *British Medical Journal* for July 31, 1920, quoting the *Tidshrift for den Norske Laegeforening* of June 15, 1920, gives a gloomy picture of the desperate strait to which the practitioners of Petrograd are reduced.

During the recent typhus epidemic in Petrograd, the mortality among physicians attending these cases was between 45% and 50%, while the mortality for the whole city was between 8% and 9%.

All physicians have been nationalized and are government employees, not being allowed to engage in private practice. The official monthly wage is between 5,000 and 6,000 rubles, plus a double food ration, which includes one-half pound of bread a day. The physicians have one public meal a day, which consists of soup and horse meat. On this diet they have carried out their onerous duties, which have increased

greatly by reason of epidemics of cholera and dysentery in the summer and smallpox and typhus in the winter.

Of the 4,000 physicians resident before the war only 800 are left, most of the rest have died of starvation, over-work, or have been victims of the various epidemics. Their work is usually done on foot, the trams being so infested with lice that their use entails great danger of contracting typhus. The cost of a horse and vehicle is 2,000 rubles an hour, and the few motor cars left cannot be used by physicians.

VITAMINES.

THE question was asked by a reader of the editorial on vitamins in the issue of Oct. 28, 1920: "How do the Eskimos get vitamins? We requested an answer of Prof. E. V. McCollum of Johns Hopkins, and have received the following reply:

Mr. Editor:

Replying to your letter regarding the Eskimo: The Eskimo had a pretty satisfactory diet in his primitive state, because he ate not only muscle meats but likewise glandular organs which supplied the various unidentified dietary essentials; blood which supplied the necessary sodium chloride, which would not have been sufficiently abundant in muscle tissue; bone marrow, which likewise supplemented the unidentified dietary factors, of which he got a portion in the glandular organs; the soft ends of bones, which pieced out the calcium supply. He was able to derive a large supply of his energy supply from fat, and with this selection he succeeded admirably with his nutrition. This is the type of selection which carnivorous animals usually make and on which they develop well if their hygienic conditions are satisfactory.

Yours sincerely,

E. V. MCCOLLUM.

MALPRACTICE DEFENSE.

LAST June the Maine Medical Association adopted an act defending its members against suits for malpractice, thus becoming the twenty-seventh state medical society in the Union having such defense and at the same time paying a compliment to the medical society of its sister state, Massachusetts, by adopting the measure that, with one or two minor additions, has