

casting Corporation, to the position of North American programme organizer of the B.B.C. Overseas Service and the work in Great Britain of the Canadian Broadcasting unit.

Control of Lice

IN the *British Medical Journal* of November 2, Prof. P. A. Buxton contributes an article on this subject. The crowded sleeping conditions that prevail in some of the air-raid shelters render it likely that outbreaks of body and head lice will occur. In peacetime, at any rate, the body louse is much the rarer of the two races, but it is likely to become more prevalent. At the present time no really effective practical repellent is known. The control measures advised concern the head and body and the disinfection of clothes, blankets, etc. The best methods for effecting these processes are discussed in some detail. For control on the person the speediest method for eliminating the head louse is the use of one or other of the insecticidal liquids advised. Disinfection of garments, etc., is best done by the application of heat: 5 minutes at 129° F. or 45 minutes at 121° F. are fatal both to the lice and to their eggs or nests. It is not important whether the heat be dry or moist; but it is essential that the whole of the infested materials should be submitted to the temperature mentioned. Disinfection of clothes properly done with a domestic hot iron is quite effective. The organization and proper lay-out of disinfecting stations does not lend itself to explanation in a short article, and the reader is referred to the "Army Manual of Hygiene" for information on this aspect of the problem.

Spread of Desertic Conditions

MUCH has been heard in recent years of soil erosion, due to a variety of causes, emanating usually in ill-advised use of the land. In Africa this has been shown to cause the spread of waste or desertic conditions. In a paper in the *Geographical Journal* of November, on desert versus forest in Eastern Africa, Mr. E. J. Wayland points out that there are climatic deserts and climatic forests and that each will retain its characteristics in spite of man's interference; man can do little to change the aspects of such lands. However, between the essential desert and the essential forest there is forest land which on its desert side is (or was, since in Africa most has been destroyed) a zone of forest-desert equilibrium, disturbable, to the desert's advantage, by Nature or by man. This is the zone of counter forest, and on the true forest side shows a marginal belt where the forest holds as long as natural conditions have sway. In this belt, however, man-made desert is not merely possible but is very general in Africa. All African forest areas with one or two long dry seasons and a rainfall of not more than 30 inches a year may be regarded as marginal in character, and all such areas are liable to soil erosion. Mr. Wayland does not believe that desert will or can spread into the essential forest: the counter forest acts as a buffer that holds in check the spread of the desert conditions.

Prof. Eduard Albert

PROF. EDUARD ALBERT, a pioneer of modern surgery in Austria, was born at Sznifterberg in Bohemia on January 20, 1841. He received his medical education at the University of Vienna, where he studied under Hyrtl, Skoda, Brücke, Oppolzer and Rokitsky. After qualifying in 1867 he became assistant to Prof. Johann Dumreicher, professor of surgery in the Vienna Faculty. In 1872 he was appointed professor of surgery at Innsbruck where he remained for eight years and then succeeded Dumreicher at Vienna. It was here that he gained a European reputation by his introduction of Listerian antiseptics, which Dumreicher had rejected, and attracted a number of students who afterwards became eminent surgeons. Albert was well known in Great Britain, where he was elected an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in July 1900. His principal publications were "Diagnostik der chirurgischen Krankheiten", "Lehrbuch der Chirurgie" and "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Chirurgie". He died on September 20, 1900.

Albert King

ALBERT FREEMAN AFRICANUS KING, a pioneer in malariaology, was born at Bicester, Oxfordshire, on January 18, 1841, the son of a doctor interested in the colonization of Africa. At the age of ten he migrated with his parents to the United States. He received his medical education at the National Medical College at Washington, where he graduated at the age of twenty, and four years later obtained the degree of M.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. He settled in practice in Washington, where he attended Abraham Lincoln at the time of his assassination in 1865. He was for many years professor of obstetrics in the George Washington University and in the University of Vermont, which latter institution conferred on him the degree of LL.D. in 1904. He was the author of a "Manual of Obstetrics", which went through eleven editions; but he is best known for a paper entitled "Insects and Disease—Mosquitoes and Malaria" read before the Philosophical Society of Washington on February 10, 1882, and published in the *Popular Science Monthly* in September 1883, in which he gave nineteen reasons for believing that malaria is transmitted by the mosquito. He died in 1914.

Announcements

THE following officers of the Royal Society of South Africa have recently been elected: *President*, L. Crawford; *Treasurer*, R. W. James; *Secretary*, A. J. H. Goodwin; *Editor*, Mrs. M. R. Levyns; *Librarian*, E. Newbery; *New Additional Members of Council*, G. Arnold, W. F. Barker, M. Rindl.

It is hoped to hold the first meeting of the Colour Group of the Physical Society at the Polytechnic, Regent Street, London, W.1, at 2.0 p.m. on February 12. The first portion of the meeting will be devoted to a discussion of the draft constitution of the Group. During the second portion of the meeting four short papers will be read on "Colour Tolerance".