

Branch Notes.

TRANSVAAL.

The most successful social function ever attempted by the Society was the holding of a braai on the farm of Miss Oosthuizen on Saturday evening, November 20th.

More than 150 people were present and, but for a severe storm which occurred early in the evening and almost ruined the proceedings, it seems certain that many more would have been present.

The occasion was organised by the Entertainment Committee of the Transvaal Branch under the chairmanship of Miss J. Crosby. This Committee had the able assistance of a considerable number of voluntary helpers, including many non-members of the Society. To all of these we owe a very real debt of thanks.

From a financial point of view the function exceeded our wildest expectations, a sum of £100 os. od. being realised after all expenses had been met. At a subsequent meeting of the Entertainment Committee it was unanimously agreed that £50 os. od. be handed over to the Journal Committee to enable them to cope with the very high cost of production of "PHYSIOTHERAPY."

In a brief speech Mr. MacFarlane expressed the thanks of the Journal Committee, adding that this was the first time he had felt comfortable since taking over the task of Editor. He specially thanked Miss Oosthuizen for the enormous amount of work she had put in to make the occasion a success and for her kind gesture in permitting the use of her farm for the function.

No notes have been received from the other branches. With reference to this, Branch Secretaries are asked to forward notes giving particulars of matters of interest which may have been discussed at Branch meetings.

As the Editor also relies on the news forwarded by Branch Secretaries to maintain a Personal column it would be appreciated if they also forwarded such items as Births, Marriages, Deaths, Engagements, Movements of Members, New Appointments, etc. Particulars of dates of printing will be found on Page 2.

TRAINING SCHOOL NOTES.

Fourth year students of the University School of Physiotherapy attached to the Johannesburg General Hospital have attained a remarkable degree of success in the recent examinations.

Of eleven candidates who presented themselves for their Final examination, not one failed to pass. This result is an amazing tribute not only to the keenness of the students themselves but also to the able manner with which all members of the Instructional Staff dealt with their respective subjects.

The names of the successful candidates are: The Misses M. Barker; F. De Bruin; J. Goulden; A. Harvey; B. Jagoe; H. Loon; P. Moore; F. Robinson; D. Williams; Z. Van der Spuy and M. Nicol.

We congratulate these girls and offer very best wishes for the future to each and every one of them.

Correspondence.

Exercises and the Tired Back.

Dear Sir,

I wholeheartedly agree with the views expressed by Mr. Schermbrucker in his article on Backache which appeared in the July issue. As far as exercises are concerned, I consider that these should represent an essential part of any back treatment. Bearing this fact in mind and assuming that clinical and X-ray examination have revealed no apparent cause of the symptoms, the following few suggestions will give an idea of the procedure I adopt when dealing with the Tired Back.

Firstly the habits of the patient must be considered. One of these may be a possible cause of the symptoms and its correction could lead to a more rapid response to physical treatment.

In many cases the causative factor can be detected in the "Occupational Field." To go into this subject fully would take too long but the following remarks are relevant to it. If the patient's daily duties be of an active nature the first thing which I would consider would be the feet.

Are the shoes comfortable and suitable to the patient's build? Is there any structural change in the arches? If these be at fault, an incorrect gait is produced which leads to a postural defect, and the effects on the type of back being discussed can be none other than drastic. In such cases, exercises for the toes, feet and ankles could be advised.

For those whose occupation is of a sedentary nature, comfort, ease and relaxation is the first consideration. Exercises should be of a general nature, special attention being paid to the abdominal and shoulder muscles. Elderly patients sometimes complain of varying degrees of pain on arising in the morning; these cases should be advised to assume as comfortable and relaxed a position as possible whilst in bed. Attention should also be paid to the mattress on which they sleep; additional pillows or cushions are very useful to promote relaxation.

The younger type of patient who has previously sustained an injury which predisposes him to further strain, often indulges in strenuous recreation in the mistaken belief that this will do him good. The physiotherapist should stress to this type the importance of substituting a period of rest together with the performance of exercises of a milder nature until such time as he is fit. Despite this, however, the co-operation of the patient is not always easy to obtain.

It is also useful to instruct the patient in the correct walking posture, especially when a definite improvement has been noticed. When pain is experienced many patients develop an incorrect posture which often persists as a habit long after the original pain has gone.

A final point which cannot be over-stressed is that constipation must be avoided; this will often be found to be the cause of a low back pain. Should this be the case abdominal massage may be given with the doctor's permission.

To summarise, I am of the opinion that much can be done for the patient if he be treated as an individual, and exercises are given which appeal to him personally. With this type of approach one can be reasonably certain of obtaining some degree of co-operation.