

More recently still, civilians arriving by ship from Great Britain have apparently received infection during the voyage, and it is understood that amoebic dysentery is fairly prevalent in Great Britain.

It is quite clear that amoebic dysentery is a disease to be reckoned with, and is likely to become endemic unless energetic measures are taken to follow up notified cases until a cure is established. One disturbing factor to be remembered is that the chlorination of water does not destroy the cysts of *Entamoeba histolytica*.

*Food Poisoning.*—One hundred and fifty-nine cases were reported, as compared with 22 for 1947, and other cases are known to have occurred.

In January an outbreak occurred at the Hermitage, Mount Cook, and affected a number of the guests and staff who had eaten scones cooked on the premises. The symptoms were those of acute arsenic poisoning, and arsenic was found to be present in the scones to the extent of 3.8 grains of arsenious oxide per scone. The inquiry showed quite convincingly that arsenic had been deliberately added to the flour, but the police were not able to obtain sufficient clear evidence to warrant a charge against any individual. It is interesting to know that this quantity of arsenic can be swallowed without any fatality occurring. The fact that the poison was presented in solid food and not in solution may have hindered absorption sufficiently to allow the irritant effect of the poison to produce its own remedy.

In June an outbreak of nausea and vomiting affecting at least 40 boys in a boarding-school was possibly caused by toxin in minced meat served as cottage pie. The outbreak was not reported at the time, and a thorough investigation was impossible.

In September, 120 persons out of 150 who attended a supper were attacked with typical symptoms of food poisoning which came on in five to eight hours. The infected food was pressed ox tongue which had been cooked forty-eight hours earlier. On the day following its cooking the jelly on the tongues was quite firm, but on the second day it had liquefied. Some of the persons who sliced the tongue twelve hours before the supper ate small portions of it and were taken ill about eight hours later. The fact that the tongue was unfit for consumption was not realized, and it was served at the supper. Bacteriological investigation showed the presence of a hemolytic *Staphylococcus aureus*.

In December about 100 patients and members of the staff of a public hospital were affected with poisoning, thought to be due to a quantity of green peas. The peas were a "quick-freeze" product and about 60 lb. to 80 lb. were steamed and then placed in a refrigerator. The following day some were reheated and some were eaten cold in a salad. Persons who consumed the peas, either hot or cold, were affected. Bacteriological examination showed considerable fermentation in the peas and the presence of large numbers of anaerobic sporing bacilli and lactose fermenting *B. coli*. No organisms of the types usually associated with food poisoning were detected.

A small outbreak involving 4 persons was traced to cooked ham infected with *Staphylococcus aureus*.

The reported cases of food poisoning—viz, 159—do not include all persons known to have been affected. In a disease such as this the number of outbreaks is of more importance, epidemiologically, than the number of persons affected.

*Acute Poliomyelitis.*—Nine hundred and sixty-three positive cases were notified (Europeans, 915; Maoris, 48). Contrary to expectations, the epidemic, which began in November, 1947, continued with undiminished intensity throughout the whole of 1948,