

IODINE AND GOITRE

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. MURIEL BELL,
Nutritionist to the Health Department)

EVIDENCE that iodine is an element necessary for the prevention of goitre continues to come to hand from various quarters. Recent support for this relationship comes from Switzerland, U.S.A., and the Netherlands. If there is too little iodine, the thyroid gland in the neck becomes enlarged. Supposing that this occurs during the development of the offspring before it is born, the gland is enlarged at birth. This is known to take place in lambs on some farms in New Zealand, and sometimes the gland is so large that it presses on the windpipe, causing death of the lambs after birth. If the ewes are given pellets containing iodide, the farmer does not have a wholesale loss of lambs in this way.

As to the human offspring, congenital enlargement of the thyroid similarly tends to occur if the mother has not had sufficient iodide. In Switzerland, iodized salt has been increasingly used since 1922, and now 68 per cent. of the salt consumed in all the cantons is iodized. Prior to 1922, the incidence of congenital goitre was one in seven; now it is 1 in 500.

If goitre occurs in several successive generations, the mother may have so little thyroid secretion to pass on to the infant that its gland fails to develop, and cretinism results. This occurred in the past in Switzerland, with the result that cretinism was rife; moreover, 80 per cent. of the cases of deaf-mutism were

associated with goitre and cretinism. In Switzerland, cretinism has shown a marked decline, and similarly deaf-mutism is much less common. The figures for deaf-mutism ranged from 12 to 17 per 10,000 in 1915-1922, and fell in 1925 to 4.3 per 10,000. The decrease has been so great that it has been possible to close some of the deaf-mute institutions.

In U.S.A., propaganda for the use of iodized salt was active from 1923 to 1936, and the incidence of goitre was markedly reduced; but laxity in the matter of publicity has occurred since 1936, and according to one authority, the consumption of iodized salt has dropped with the result that there is a serious increase in the amount of goitre recorded.

In the Netherlands, shortages of iodide occurred during the war, and iodide prophylaxis became irregular. The leading doctor of the Netherlands Goitre Commission found that the percentage of goitres in school-children ran parallel to the lack of iodide prophylaxis. For instance, in 1931 before any iodide administration, 40 per cent. of school-children examined in Culemborg had goitres; in 1939, after four-and-a-half years of iodide supplementation, the figure was reduced to nil for the three-year-olds and to 14 per cent. for the children up to 12 years of age. In 1945, when there had been no iodide to give them for over a year, the figures again rose to 41 per cent. for the children up to 12 years of age.

The price of freedom—from goitre—is eternal vigilance.

"THE LISTENER" CROSSWORD

(Solution to No. 370)



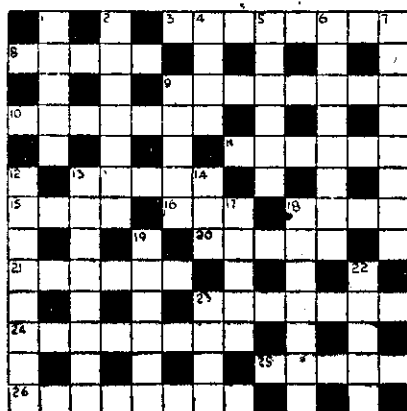
Clues Across

- He may live in an igloo for part of the year.
- This for the 13 across is this for the 21 across.
- Recollected.
- Cite her as one who deliberately rejects orthodox beliefs.
- Swelling.
- "The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing—, No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed."
- Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard"
- "Let us — and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." (Isaiah).
- Place for storing ensilage.
- Shakespeare makes his last words "O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die."
- See 8 across.
- Disable.
- Out of place.
- Use merit (anag.).
- Persian hookah.

Clues Down

- Confused noise.
- No leech (anag.).
- If you take anything on this, you run a risk.
- A Planet.
- Thinking to please his mistress, he wore yellow stockings, cross-gartered. ("Twelfth Night.")
- One who gets the worst of a deal.
- Siren (anag.).
- Sharkskin.
- Majesty.
- More than half the earth.
- Pleasure trips to a French town?
- A treacherous form of present.
- "Where there is no vision, the people —" (Proverbs, 29).
- Incline.
- Proceed in a curve.

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