Introduction

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FOR years the Association for the Study of Infectious Disease has held symposia on topics of importance in the field of infection. The Scottish Society has been similarly occupied behind Hadrian's Wall. The 1974 Symposium celebrates the amalgamation of the two bodies into the British Society for the Study of Infection and it is appropriate that this Society should expand at a time when the world, as a result of high speed travel, is shrinking. There is now virtually no place on earth from which a determined traveller cannot reach this country within 24 hr. No longer is the United Kingdom protected from foreign disease by the slower forms of travel, as there is now no infectious tropical disease with an incubation period shorter than the time of an airlight to this country. That these diseases are now seen more frequently here is clear from a look at any major infectious diseases unit where an increasing proportion of the patients will be recently arrived immigrants who have become ill and have been admitted for diagnosis and treatment.

It is right therefore that for its first symposium the British Society should turn to this topic of increasing importance, 'Travel. Is it safe?' It is only too clear that everyday humdrum journeying at

home is far from safe either in the short term to life and limb, or in the long term to the fume-laden lungs or the narrowed arteries. But what of the Englishman who ventures abroad on business or pleasure? What risks from parasites, insects, venomous reptiles, contaminated food and drink, or even the predatory female does he run? These questions and others are answered in this edition of the Postgraduate Medical Journal containing the proceedings of the Society's symposium on the hazards of travel.

Our President, Dr A. B. Christie, about to set out on extended foreign travel himself can but take note of the warnings within these proceedings. His eminence in the field of infectious disease should not only protect him from the hazards he will meet but be of inestimable benefit to those he goes to advise. We wish him well and look forward to hearing in due course, in his inimitable style, a tag-laden, humorous and informative account of his travels.

Our thanks are due to our speakers for preparing their manuscripts and to our sponsors, CIBA, Glaxo, Roche, and Upjohn Ltd for the financial help which made this meeting possible.