

services.

The latest measure is a legislation by the State Government for the iodization of fine table salt effective July 1981 and to be fully enforced in January 1982. The legislation does not call for iodized coarse salt because it was believed unnecessary for several reasons. It has been reported that at least 80 percent of coarse salt is used for salting of fish, jellyfish and other foods, and as fertilizers, therefore not much is actually consumed. There were complaints that iodized coarse salt is a relatively-poor preservative compared to the non-iodized salt. Also it has been observed that more and more people in the rural areas are turning to fine table salt for their daily cooking and consumption as their living standards improve. Nonetheless, with the enforcement of the legislation, health education and information would be stepped up on the use of iodized table salt for daily consumption. At any rate, the department would still continue its normal distribution of iodized coarse salt especially in the event of any difficulty in use of table salt in the affected areas.

It is our belief that with these measures, the

problems of goitre in the State would be reduced in a few years time.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Tan Yaw Kwang
Director of Medical Services,
Sarawak

REFERENCE

Chen P.C.Y. Endemic goitre: a preventable and yet highly prevalent disease in Sarawak. *Med J Malaysia* 1981;36 67- 69.

Editorial Comments

We take this opportunity to congratulate the Sarawak State Government and the Director of Medical Services, Sarawak, for the praiseworthy action that they have taken to safeguard the people of Sarawak from goitre.

Hon. Editor

BOOK REVIEW

WHO EXPERT COMMITTEE ON BIOLOGICAL STANDARDIZATION: Thirty-first Report, Technical Report Series 658, World Health Organization, Geneva, 1981, 325 pp.

This is an excellent detailed report of the WHO Expert Committee on Biological Standardization whose functions include the designation of international reference materials, the establishment of international requirements and the formulation of guidelines for biological substances, as well as recommendations for various procedures. A guideline for the quality assessment of antitumour antibiotics has been incorporated and the production and testing of blood and

plasma products discussed in detail. Three International Reference Preparations of Human, Bovine and Rabbit Thromboplastins have been established so that the preparation, testing and calibration of thromboplastic products from different tissue sources as oral anticoagulants can be standardized. Guidelines for the national control of vaccines and sera are also spelt out so that developing countries can establish quality control in the various phases of production and manufacture of these products.

The annexes are extensive and detailed and should serve as a good source of reference for meeting the needs of biological standardization.

S. K. LAM