

medical services, the tuberculosis prevention services, the maternal and child welfare services, and the many other duties and services which are the obligation and the care of so many and such varied local and national bodies.

Dependants.

In the development of health insurance full cognisance must be taken of the fact that however grievous it may be for the insured to fall ill, it may be an even greater distress and expense to them to have to deal with illness of a dependant. The insured should be insured, not only for the risk he himself undergoes, but for "third-party risk". The only expense to which an insured employee would be put in such cases is the expense of medicine, nursing, and medical attendance—apart from the question of funeral expenses. It should be part of any scheme which aims at giving him indemnity against the loss due to bodily or mental disablement, to provide full cover both for the insured and dependants.

Investment of Reserves.

Just as it appears amazing that a health insurance scheme should be established without any medical service, so also does it seem amazing that a health insurance scheme should not invest a large part of its reserves in better housing, in welfare clinics, in the establishment of hospitals, and in other long-term capital investments.

The proposals which have been outlined above could, in the main, be put into force with little or no delay. They are, in reality, a short-term plan, not dealing with a number of aspects which would develop with the change of modern methods and ideas. I trust that we may soon see them or similar proposals reach fruition.

6. IRISH MEDICAL SERVICES.

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The Draft Interim Report of the Medical Planning Commission of the British Medical Association defines the objects of medical service as—firstly to provide a system of medical service directed towards the achievement of positive health, of the prevention of disease and the relief of sickness; secondly to render available to every individual all necessary medical services, both general and specialist, and both domiciliary and institutional. This is the definition adopted in the Beveridge Plan.

The Journal of the Medical Association of Éire in a recent issue which contains quotations from the Official Abstract, "The Beveridge Report in Brief", says:—

"Some enthusiastic persons are already asking that a scheme drawn up on the lines of Sir William Beveridge's should be applied to this country regardless of the difference of social customs, of public services and of finances which characterises the two countries. We have suffered much in the past from following too closely social systems which existed elsewhere. Our Poor Law system was taken lock, stock and barrel from the already obsolescent English system and planted in a soil which was alien to it and in which it has only recently, when much modified, been of real service. We would like to see the spirit which inspires it alive and active here."

Indeed, rather have we in this country been in advance of England in many features of the world of medicine—clinical teaching and discovery, the conferring of medical degrees on women, abolition of boards of guardians—to mention at random only a few of the ways in which medicine in our country has given the lead to her neighbour. Furthermore, the medical services here are not strictly comparable with those of England where the panel system serves such a large portion of the community (it does not exist here), and the nearest approach to our dispensary scheme is the parish doctor there.

The present day medical services in Éire as elsewhere, are preventive and curative. The personnel is derived from our universities and the Royal College of Surgeons, as well as the Apothecaries Hall. Public health or preventive medicine is largely a post-European war development—the Rockefeller Institute having assisted here in the early days of its establishment. Curative medicine as practised in the voluntary hospitals (general and special) of our cities and towns, in the county hospitals, by the dispensary doctors and private practitioners is of the highest order, making night and day demands on its servants—underpaid too often and too disgracefully. It is actually within our own memory that the salary of some dispensary doctors was raised from £90 to £120 per annum, and eventually increased to £250 a year (thanks to the efforts of the late Dr. Hennessey—Irish Secretary to the Medical Association—in a very great measure).

Public Health Service.

The Public Health Service (Éire), established 1926, and gradually extended to all parts of the country, covers the administration of all the existing social services: tuberculosis, maternity and child welfare, school medical, venereal disease, blind welfare and school meals. They are carried out in each county borough by the medical officer of health and in each county by the county medical officer of health or by assistant medical officers of health supervised by them. There are twenty-seven county medical officers of health and fifteen assistants in Éire, as well as a chief medical officer in the Cities of Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Limerick, with a staff of seven assistant medical officers of health in Dublin, two in Cork, one in Limerick and two in Waterford (part-time). The doctors advise the local authorities for their areas on all matters affecting the health of the inhabitants, and make recommendations regarding the administration of the laws, bye-laws and regulations dealing with the public health services and the supervision of food. They also supervise the work of the district medical officers of health, veterinary inspectors, sanitary inspectors, sanitary sub-officers, public health nurses and other staff employed in connection with the schemes and services already mentioned. The medical officer of health and port sanitary authority take effective measures to prevent the entry of plague, cholera, yellow fever, small pox and typhus fever in accordance with the International Sanitary Convention of 1926.

There are 45 whole-time nurses in the Public Health Service (Éire) in connection with tuberculosis, school medical service, maternity and child welfare, diphtheria immunisation, inspection of midwives, etc. About 180 part-time district nurses also help—(Queen's Institute and Lady Dudley Schemes).

Maternity and Child Welfare.

The maternity and child welfare service supervises the health of the expectant and nursing mother and her child at clinics by doctors and nurses and in the homes by the visiting public health nurses of the local authority. Dental treatment is provided and recommendations made to the free milk, extra nutrients, free dinners, etc., schemes, as well as to ante-natal clinics and convalescent homes. In the case of the child the observing and remedying of defects continues until it attains the age of five years. There were 146 approved maternity and child welfare schemes in operation in Éire in 1940, mostly in the cities and towns. Only thirty of these were administered by local authorities; the balance was run by voluntary agencies. Four operated in the county boroughs, 27 in urban districts and the remainder in Counties Dublin, Wicklow, Limerick, Kildare and Monaghan. Payments for the year 1940 totalled £25,000. Boarding-out agencies provide foster mothers for children of deserted, widowed or unmarried mothers. 2,381 cases were sent in 1940.

School Medical Service.

This is administered by the local authority and the Department of Local Government and Public Health. It looks after the health of 470,000 children attending the national schools of Éire, one-sixth of whom reside in Dublin County Borough. Approved schemes are in operation in each county and county borough for the medical inspection of children who have attained the age of five years, by the medical officer of health or assistant medical officer of health. The care-continuity of child health is thus maintained until school-leaving age is attained at fourteen years. Treatment of defects is carried out by dentists whole- or part-time, and by specialists in diseases of the eye, ear, nose and throat, skin, orthopædics, T.B. and V.D. There is one whole-time dentist employed in three of the Twenty-Six Counties and two in Dublin County Borough. As in the case of the maternity and child welfare and tuberculosis schemes, the cost of the school medical service is borne by the central and local authorities on a fifty-fifty basis. £34,000 was expended in Éire during 1940 in the medical inspection of 126,000 children, and the treatment of defects in 80,000.

There are six special boarding schools in the Gaeltacht called Preparatory Colleges with 269 students, 106 boys and 163 girls. There is an official medical officer for each college, usually the doctor in the district where it is situated. He or she examines every pupil twice yearly and visits the school each week during the term to supervise the general health and treat any cases of illness.

There are 248 children and young persons in reformatories, and 6,593 children and young persons in industrial schools, including orphans. There is a doctor who looks after the health of each of these institutions, as well as a special visiting medical officer, who inspects all these "reformed schools" in Éire—recently appointed.

Tuberculosis.

In each county borough and county, under the provisions of the Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Acts, 1908-13, as amended by subsequent enactments, an approved scheme for the treatment of the disease is in operation. The schemes in the county boroughs are administered by the corporations and in the counties (except Cork

tutions and in approved employment schemes. The number of such persons on the register for 1940, Éire, was 3,029. The National Council, a voluntary organisation, gives valuable assistance, especially the Prevention of Blindness Sub-committee.

Milk Supply.

Veterinary inspectors have been appointed in all districts for the supervision of the meat and milk supplies, except in parts of three counties where their duties are confined to supervision of milk.

School Meals.

Approved school meals schemes operate in four county boroughs, 41 urban districts and seven towns. Approximately 267 national schools participate in the scheme at an average cost of food per meal of 1½d., i.e., bread and butter or jam, or a bun and milk or cocoa. In some cases, stew or soup is given instead. These schemes are supervised by the medical officers of health and are administered by the school meals committees. Half the amount expended on food is recouped by the central to the local authority.

Under the School Meals Gaeltacht Scheme a similar meal is supplied to children attending national schools in the Fíor-Ghaeltacht of West Cork, Donegal, Galway and Kerry, and this is also recouped.

Curative Medicine.

The principal voluntary and clinical hospitals are situated in Dublin, Cork and Galway—both general and specialised, adult and children. There are, in addition, 79 county and district hospitals and thirteen cottage hospitals in Éire. In the country are 27 county homes, two children's homes, one maternity home and five fever hospitals (apart from special blocks of other hospitals).

The total number of insane persons within official cognisance in 1940, was 21,081 of which 90.8 per cent. were in the district and auxiliary mental hospitals, involving an expenditure of £1,100,000.

Mental defectives and epileptics are received by four institutions in Éire.

The sick in their own homes in Éire, other than those who are looked after by private practitioners, are cared for by the 649 dispensary medical officers of 644 dispensary districts. The dispensary doctor is also the local medical officer of health for his or her district and is concerned with public health, infectious disease, vaccination, diphtheria immunisation, etc. In some districts he is also the doctor to the local hospital. The number of new cases treated by dispensary doctors in Éire during 1941 was 940,157, and by the 691 dispensary midwives and nurses, 12,652. For the year 1940-41 the number of midwives on this country's roll was 6,908, and in the same period there were 10,080 registered nurses—7,392 general, 610 fever, 143 sick children's, 1,929 mental, 6 male.

District Nurses.

Since 1889-90, 223 trained nurses serve 195 districts in Éire. They look after those sick people in their own homes who cannot employ a private nurse. This is the Queen's Institute of District Nursing in Ireland and the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme—the latter serves mostly the western seaboard—supported by voluntary contributions plus a State subsidy for assisting in public health work.