

## DIVISION OF DENTAL HYGIENE

## SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE

The School Dental Service now operates at 447 centres, as against 428 at the end of the previous year. As at the 31st March, 1946, the staff numbered 641, including 183 student dental nurses. The field staff of school dental nurses remains approximately the same as at the date of the previous annual report—viz., 390, as against 389 twelve months previously. Resignations of married nurses on the return of their husbands from war service overseas have continued during the year, with the result that the staffing problem has become acute. Consideration has been given to the question of adopting expedients to bridge the period until the increased output from the Training School becomes effective. As recorded in the last annual report, the entry of student dental nurses has been increased to one hundred per year.

The number of children under regular treatment is 210,920, an increase of 19,580 during the year. This includes 24,364 children of pre-school age.

The number of schools now receiving treatment is 2,348, as compared with 2,321 at the end of the previous year.

The total number of operations for the year was 1,572,156. This number included 871,450 reparative fillings in both permanent and deciduous teeth and 194,667 preventive fillings, a total of 1,066,117 fillings. In contrast with this figure, which represents approximately the number of teeth preserved for useful service, the number of teeth removed as unsavable (or in some cases to relieve overcrowding) was 68,656, a ratio of 6.3 extractions to every 100 fillings.

The Dental Health Education Officer, to whose appointment reference was made in the last annual report, has continued to develop this important phase of the work of the Dental Division. The appointment of a school dental nurse experienced in this work to assist the Dental Health Education Officer has been authorized and will take effect shortly. The field staff of the School Dental Service has continued to show commendable enthusiasm for health education work throughout the year, as is shown by the fact that their activities under this heading number a total of 8,279.

The *School Dental Service Gazette*, which is edited by the Dental Health Education Officer, continues to fulfil a most useful function in keeping the widely dispersed staff in close touch with the activities of the Service as a whole, and as a medium for the dissemination of information and instructions.

## PROPOSED DENTAL SERVICE FOR ADOLESCENTS

The further development of State dental services to the adolescent section of the community has continued to receive close attention during the year, with a view to the inauguration of such a service in the near future. An attempt to recruit dental surgeons to the Department for this work proved disappointing, but the possibility of doing this will be further explored.

## ADMINISTRATION

During the year Mr. A. D. Brice, B.D.S., Assistant Director (Training) and Principal of the Dominion Training School for Dental Nurses, resigned in order to enter private practice. This necessitated a number of staff transfers and promotions. Increasing difficulty is being experienced in securing and retaining the services of suitably qualified and experienced dental officers.

## DENTAL BURSARIES

Additional University bursaries were granted to dental students at the beginning of 1946 to the number of 23. Of the bursaries granted in previous years, 45 were renewed for 1946 and 9 were suspended temporarily. The total number of bursaries held (including those temporarily suspended) is 76.