

The cost of hospital expenditure per head of the population in the United Kingdom is 7½d., and including special hospitals 1s. 1d. per head.

In Australia the hospital expenditure is 3s. per head, and the charitable-aid expenditure is 5s. 3d. per head, or a total of 8s. 3d. per head on the population of the Commonwealth.

In New Zealand the expenditure on hospitals is 4s. 6½d. per head and on charitable aid 2s. 3½d., or a total of 6s. 10d. per head of the Dominion. In considering these figures it must not be forgotten that £325,199 was also distributed last year in old-age pensions. The sums distributed by private charity organizations cannot be estimated. The expenditure on charitable aid, as given above, simply represents the amount expended during the year by the various Charitable Aid Boards and separate institutions: it does not include grants made by the State to private institutions.

Table XIV shows the cost per head of hospital and charitable-aid expenditure in each district on the population of the Dominion, and Table XV the percentage on the rateable value in each district.

### Hospitals.

The total hospital receipts for the year amounted to £247,045, as against £210,876 for the previous year, or an increase of £36,169.

The chief items of increase were as follows:—

	1907-8. £	1906-7. £	Increase. £
From Government ... ..	88,956	68,726	20,230
From local bodies ... ..	64,957	56,985	8,002
Bequests ... ..	3,273	2,329	944
Payments by patients ... ..	30,491	26,577	3,914
Receipts from other sources ... ..	15,096	5,599	9,497

Unfortunately there was a decrease of £1,510 in the amount received as voluntary contributions—viz., £12,127—as against £13,637 of the previous year. I feel sure that this falling-off is due to the fact that in many districts no special efforts have been made to raise contributions. If properly approached the public is very generous about its local institutions, and I certainly think that if a special Saturday and Sunday were set aside throughout the Dominion for hospital collections, emulation between the various districts would be aroused and a splendid response made.

The chief items in the increase of £24,838 in hospital expenditure are,—

	1907-8. £	1906-7. £	Increase. £
Rations, provisions ... ..	39,411	37,098	2,313
Surgery, dispensary ... ..	15,431	15,145	286
Fuel, light ... ..	13,248	11,616	1,632
Bedding, clothing ... ..	4,908	4,266	642
Furniture, crockery ... ..	6,649	4,700	1,949
Washing, laundry ... ..	1,708	1,639	69
Salaries, wages ... ..	63,171	55,653	7,518
Water-supply ... ..	1,757	1,543	214
Repairs ... ..	5,236	4,876	360
Additions to buildings, new buildings ... ..	39,499	31,508	7,991
Printing, advertising ... ..	2,021	1,861	160
Other expenses, including interest and commission ... ..	15,020	13,234	1,786

The only items in which there was a decrease in expenditure were,—

	1907-8. £	1906-7. £	Decrease. £
Wines, ales, &c. ... ..	1,084	1,174	90
Funerals ... ..	509	609	100

As regards this substantial increase it must be remembered that 1,639 more patients were treated in hospitals than in the year previous, and the total collective days' stay was 553,119, against 549,371; the individual average days' stay in hospital, however, being 33·57 days, as against 34·71 in the previous year.

The total expenditure on new buildings was £39,498 12s. 2d., the largest amounts being spent on the following hospitals, viz.:—

	£
Waikato ... ..	7,631
Masterton ... ..	5,448
Wellington ... ..	4,569
Palmerston ... ..	3,311

Nor is it probable that there will be any decrease in this expenditure for some time to come. The expenses of several recent additions to hospitals are not included in this year's accounts, and during the coming year considerable extensions are contemplated at no less than ten hospitals.

An examination into the large increase in salaries—£63,171, as against £55,652 in 1906-7—shows that the salaries were increased at forty-four and reduced at five hospitals. At four institutions the salaries remained as they were last year.

The chief cause of this increase is undoubtedly due to an extra demand and a difficulty in obtaining registered nurses. In many instances also the salaries of Medical Superintendents have been raised, and extra appointments have been made,