

*Medical Inspection of School-children.*

11. Though the need for initiating a scheme for the medical inspection of school-children has been talked of for some years, it is only quite recently that it has been possible to put such a scheme into being. For this purpose Drs. Cawkwell, Gunn, and Patterson have been appointed, and will shortly take up their new duties. There is little doubt that their investigations and reports will show the need for making further appointments in this important branch of public-health work. In the meantime, however, these officers will cover as much ground as is possible.

*Sale of Food and Drugs Act.*

12. During the year fifty-one prosecutions were made, and forty-nine convictions recorded. When the regulations that have been compiled under this Act have been gazetted it will be possible to enforce them with the vigour that is undoubtedly needed, and this will be simplified by the fact that the Department has now in each hospital district an officer who is responsible (*inter alia*) for the due enforcement of this Act.

**HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE AID.**

13. Though the financial year ends on the 31st March, it is unusual for Hospital secretaries to furnish the Department with any of their returns until June; indeed, some returns do not reach the Department until September, and even then have often to be referred for further information. Now, Parliament usually meets at the end of June, and, by statute, the report of the Department should be laid on the table of the House in July. It is difficult therefore to furnish the report by the statutory time, but still more difficult is it to make more than a passing comment on the information supplied.

To draw proper deductions from hospital statistics they must be studied and digested at leisure, and not under pressure of a report to be submitted on data but recently to hand—data, by the way, that are often supplied by underpaid officials, as is the case with most of our hospital secretaries.

Though the report shows the receipts and expenditure of hospital authorities for the last year, little attempt has been made to criticize the expenditure under the various items, it being considered wiser to defer such criticism until the returns can be further studied.

*Receipts.*

14. The total receipts for the past year on account of hospitals, charitable aid, and public health was £556,108—an increase of £61,123 over the previous year, the receipts for the past four years being—

	£
1908-9 .. .. .	414,158
1909-10 .. .. .	443,522
1910-11 .. .. .	494,985
1911-12 .. .. .	556,108

The following are the receipts from the principal sources of revenue :—

Through Government contributions—

	£
1908-9 .. .. .	154,070
1909-10 .. .. .	152,856
1910-11 .. .. .	167,941
1911-12 .. .. .	189,011

Through local rates—

1908-9 .. .. .	116,134
1909-10 .. .. .	129,012
1910-11 .. .. .	131,524
1911-12 .. .. .	149,203

Through voluntary contributions—

1908-9 .. .. .	20,861
1909-10 .. .. .	31,061
1910-11 .. .. .	35,433
1911-12 .. .. .	31,656

Through payments by persons relieved—

1908-9 .. .. .	47,777
1909-10 .. .. .	56,742
1910-11 .. .. .	61,983
1911-12 .. .. .	64,138

15. As compared with last year there has been a decrease of £3,777 in voluntary contributions. Prior to 1885, when the hospitals were maintained by voluntary contributions and Government subsidy, one-ninth of our total expenditure was met by voluntary contributions; to-day this proportion has fallen to one-fifteenth.

16. There has been a gradual increase in the payments by persons relieved, viz.,—

	Payments by Hospital Patients.	Payments by Inmates of Charitable Institutions.	Total.
	£	£	£
1908-9 .. .. .	34,414	13,363	47,777
1909-10 .. .. .	42,714	14,028	56,742
1910-11 .. .. .	44,625	17,290	61,983*
1911-12 .. .. .	47,338	16,698	64,138*

\* Includes also district nursing fees.