

ADDENDUM.

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS SENT TO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.*

From Dr. W. E. COLLINS, Wellington.

1. How many years of practice in New Zealand?
Thirty-three years.
2. What is the average remuneration of lodge doctors?
15s. This does not include drugs, but includes attendance on children to the age of fifteen years, and aged parents.
3. Have medical practitioners and friendly societies been generally in amicable relations?
Yes, as far as I know.
4. Have expenses of doctors increased greatly of late years? If so, in what direction?
Yes, considerably. Rents are higher than they used to be. In order to enable doctors to get about more quickly many use motor-cars, which are more expensive than buggies or broughams. Books are more numerous and more expensive, and the necessary instruments are also more numerous, and entail a good deal of expense.
5. Has the cost of medical attendance increased in the last ten years, or in twenty years?
I do not think so, as far as the general practitioners are concerned.
6. Have the cost of drugs and quality of drugs varied in late years—that is, is a finer quality or more expensive kind of drug demanded now than was formerly the case?
Many drugs of higher quality and of the more expensive kinds are demanded now, and many special forms of treatment, with vaccines, &c.
7. Have maternity expenses increased, and in what direction?
Generally I should say that maternity expenses have remained about the same during the last ten years.
8. Have maternity homes, State nurses, &c., been of pecuniary advantage to the poorer classes?
Yes.
9. Have high rents in cities a tendency to keep workers in slum districts or in insanitary dwellings?
It would be the tendency of high rents to keep workers in old and insanitary buildings.
10. Speaking generally, is there greater tendency to disease in the average man or woman than was the case twenty years ago?
No.
11. If the cost of living, due to high rents, costly food, &c., is on the increase, would that account for a higher rate of nervous or mental disease?
Yes, partly; but I think that the higher rate of nervous disease is due much more to the greater stress of life. The mental strain in most businesses is much greater now than it used to be.
12. Is there a greater air of comfort and independence among the artisan and labouring classes than formerly?
I certainly think so.
13. If disease is increasing, does it appear most in town or in the country? If in towns, is there a dominating cause?
I do not think that disease is increasing. I should say that, taking the average for ten years, the amount of disease would be much the same, or perhaps a little less at the present time. Such diseases as typhoid, tuberculosis, dysentery appear to be on the decrease, but cancer seems to be on the increase. This, however, may be more apparent than real, owing to the much more exact methods of diagnosis in use now.
14. Have you noticed any diseases arising from occupations (say, in bakers, wharf labourers, tailors, shop-assistants)?
No.
15. Considering the many evils arising from imperfect digestion and weak nutrition, do you consider that State inspection and care of the teeth of school-children are desirable?
Very desirable.
16. Do you consider that the birth-rate, being now far lower than it was twenty years ago, arises from—(a) physical weakness in modern women? (b) women engaging in industrial occupations? (c) overwork or disease on the part of the men? (d) limitation of families for economic reasons?
(a.) No. (b.) No. (c.) No. (d.) Yes, certainly.
17. Do the difficulties attending maternity cases in the backblocks influence married couples towards work in towns?
Yes.
18. Can you suggest any means for diminishing the cost of living without prejudicial effect on health?
Not amongst the working-classes.

* Dr. H. Goldstein, of Auckland (see page 335), gave evidence there before the Commission.