be little doubt that on this account rum is a more rapid and powerful stimulant than the other spirits, and possibly this may be a reason for retaining it for the use, under supervision, of the military and naval services. The analysis of the specimen described above gave the following results:—Alcohol by volume, 40·14 per cent. (equal to 30° under proof); extractives, 0·41 per cent.; mineral matter, 0·15 per cent. The secondary products given in parts per 100,000 parts of alcohol present were as follows: Volatile acidity reckoned as acetic acid, 75·0; ethers, 176; aldehyde, 12·5; furfural, 2·5; higher alcohols, 125. These figures are quite in accordance with those yielded by a genuine old mature rum. The spirit possessed the peculiar characteristics in regard to aroma and taste of genuine rum, and was "round" and smooth to the palate. The ethers occur to about twice the quantity found in genuine Cognac brandy, but show some reduction owing to the dilution now required by the State to a maximum alcoholic strength of 30° below proof.

THE BELGIAN DOCTORS' AND PHARMACISTS' RELIEF FUND.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

THE following additional subscriptions to the Fund have been received:—

	£	s.	d.
Dr. Burrowes	1	1	0
Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, for the North British Branch of Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (per Dr. Norman Walker)—			
Subscriptions in hand, April, 1915	0	15	0
Dr. James Caskie	1	1	0
Mr. R. Hay	0	10	6
Mr. H. Dryerre	1	1	0
Edinburgh District Chemists' Trade Association (per Mr. A. A. Murray)	2	2	0
Mr. W. G. Johnstone	1	1	0
Mr. J. S. B. Heddie	0	10	0
Mr. Alex. Inglis	0	10	0
Dr. G. D. H. Carpenter (24th donation—total £24)	1	0	0

Subscriptions to the Fund should be sent to the treasurer of the Fund, Dr. H. A. Des Vœux, at 14, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W., and should be made payable to the Belgian Doctors' and Pharmacists' Relief Fund crossed Lloyds Bank, Limited.

THE APPEAL FOR SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS.

Surgical instruments should be sent to the Master of the Society of Apothecaries, Apothecaries' Hall, Blackfriars, E.C.

KING EDWARD'S HOSPITAL FUND FOR LONDON.

THE annual meeting of the Governors and General Council of King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, to receive the accounts and the report of the General Council for the year 1916, was held at St. James's Palace on April 27th, the Duke of TECK being in the chair.

Lord REVELSTOKE, honorary treasurer, in presenting the account of receipts and expenditure and the balance-sheet for the year ending Dec. 31st, 1916, said that the Fund had received support enabling it to put a substantial addition to reserve. This addition, which amounted to no less than £143,000, was due mainly to the receipt of £137,000 on account of the residue of the estate of the late Lady Wilton. Since the end of the year a further sum has been received, raising the total of the bequest to £163,000. The net loss on the realisation of investments shown in the balance-sheet was due to a sale of the Fund's holding of American securities, which the Finance Committee had considered it their duty to make in response to the invitation from H.M. Treasury, and the re-investment of the proceeds in British Government securities.

The SPEAKER of the House of Commons moved the adoption of the accounts, which was seconded by Viscount SANDHURST and carried unanimously.

Mr. JOHN G. GRIFFITHS, honorary secretary, presented the draft report of the Council for the year 1916, of which the following is a summary:—

The total receipts for the year 1916 were £326,474 3s. 9d., of which £9447 15s. 5d. were contributions to capital, and £317,026 8s. 4d. receipts on general account, the general fund receipts being made up as follows: Annual subscriptions, £25,403 3s. 6d.; donations, £5837 1s. 5d.; contribution from League of Mercy, £15,000; from

the estate of Isabella Countess of Wilton, £137,634 18s. 11d.; from the Lewis estate, £3000; other legacies, £33,418 7s. 8d.; dividends and interest from investments, £96,532 16s. 10d.; from the Trustees of the Bawden Fund, £200. The amount distributed was £170,000, which was £30,000 more than the amount applied to this purpose in 1915, and £12,500 more than the previous maximum appropriation before the war. Of the amount distributed £162,500 were allocated to London hospitals and £7500 to consumption sanatoria and convalescent homes taking London patients, as against £133,500 and £6500 respectively in 1915. Of the £162,500 granted by the Fund to the London hospitals, £128,425 were given in aid of general maintenance, £15,000 to the reduction of debts on maintenance account, and £19,075 toward improvement schemes or in reduction of liabilities on such schemes undertaken before the war. The Fund had continued to encourage the hospitals in the policy of postponing all schemes of capital expenditure not exceptionally urgent or not already in hand at the outbreak of war, and the total grants in aid of new schemes were only £6525. The increase in grants for maintenance over those made in 1915 amounted to £25,900. This large addition to the grants was, however, by no means in excess of the needs of the hospitals. The total sum distributed amongst hospitals, convalescent homes, and consumption sanatoria during the last ten years (after deducting conditional grants to the extent of £6500 that had been allowed to lapse) was £1,544,750. Since the foundation of the Fund a total amount of £2,268,416 had been distributed. The average annual distribution for the whole period of 20 years had been £113,420 16s. 5d. During the year the amount spent on administration was £3161 2s. 3d., or 19s. 4d. per £100 of the total amount received, as compared with £3205 16s. 1d., or £1 8s. 3d. per £100, last year. The corresponding percentage for the whole period since the inauguration of the Fund had been £1 4s. 3d., or less than 3d. in every £1 received, the average yearly outlay in this respect being £2836 2s. 8d. The League of Mercy this year had contributed £15,000, a larger sum than was received from the League in any of the last three years. The total amount contributed to the Fund by the League of Mercy since its foundation in 1899 now amounted to £245,000, apart from the sums awarded by the League to institutions outside the area of the Fund's distributions. The legacies received during the year included, in addition to the bequest of the late Isabella Countess of Wilton and a further amount of £3000 from the Lewis bequest, £20,193 19s. 5d. from the late Lady Brownlow, widow of Field-Marshal Sir Charles Brownlow; £10,000 given by the executors of the late Mr. Thomas Stephen Whitaker in the exercise of their discretionary powers; and £5000 to capital from the late Rt. Hon. Sir Andrew Richard Scoble.

Viscount IVEAGH moved the adoption of the report, which was seconded by Viscount KNUTSFORD and carried unanimously.

New Inventions.

AN INSTRUMENT TO ENABLE ARMLESS MEN TO TURN OVER THE LEAVES OF BOOKS.

ONE of the great difficulties with which men who have lost both hands have to contend, is turning over the leaves of

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

books they may be reading. With the aid of Captain C. G. M. Hatfield of the 18th Middlesex, and Mr. Barker of the Engineering Laboratory, I have devised a small instrument, one end of which is held between the teeth and the other—which is provided with an indiarubber cap—is pressed against the leaf and with a little practice the leaf can be readily turned over. The instrument is raised on two diverging feet so that one end is lifted off the level of the table and can be easily picked up by the mouth. The figures show the instrument in use and the details on a larger scale. The metal-work is aluminium, and the pad for the teeth is made of compressed fibre—any kind of rubber seems to serve the required purpose. The instrument may be obtained of Messrs. S. Maw, Son, and Sons, 7-12, Aldersgate-street, London, E.C. 1. Price 3s. each. Christ's College Lodge, Cambridge. A. E. SHIPLEY.

THE LANCET.

LONDON: SATURDAY, MAY 19, 1917.

The Supply of Medical Officers for the Army: Civil and Military Medical Needs.

THE supply of medical officers for the Army has been kept up by the Central Medical War Committee, the Committee of Reference of the English Royal Colleges, and the Scottish Medical Service Emergency Committee, in accordance with the demands of the War Office, and it has been possible to accomplish this by strenuous work on the part of the Executives of those three bodies, in coöperation with Local Medical War Committees which in some districts have worked with great energy and discrimination. The result, moreover, reflects a real desire on the part of the medical profession as a whole to help their country in its need or the efforts of the Committees would have failed in their object. Without going into the exact figures, which would have no particular meaning unless they were considered in connexion with figures which alter from time to time in accordance with the military situation, as well as with the general statistics of the medical profession, we may say that last week the War Office required 250 additional medical officers by a certain date, and that 234 of them were found within two days of that date. Those who know how firmly in many areas the claims of the civilian population have been pressed, and how scrupulously the right or fairness of exemption has been tested in the cases of appeal, must agree that the results of a system based on a voluntary principle, and still working in the thirty-third month of the war, are creditable to the patriotism of medical men as a section of the community.

There is no doubt, however, that the Committees entrusted by statute with the duty of recruiting the members of the medical profession for military services have nearly come to the end of their resources. This has been signified quite plainly to the War Office during the last few days, and must have been common knowledge to the medical profession as a whole, for the local efforts to spare practitioners and to fill the gaps created become more and more strenuous as time goes on and as the War Office needs remain unsatisfied. There are certain areas from which only incomplete returns have been made as yet to the Central Medical War Committee, and there are medical men about whose arrangements the Local Medical Committees are doubtful, and other medical men who, according to these Committees, cannot be spared unless the principle of substitution is put in hand in some large and general way. From these sources a certain number of medical men can still be obtained whose age and

qualification are quite in keeping with their acceptance of commissions, but it must not be forgotten that a proportion of these men will certainly be rejected on physical grounds, and it may be that some who still are calculated in the returns as potential officers have already failed to come up to the physical standard. It is also believed that, depleted as the ranks of the men holding whole-time appointments may be, a further contribution can be obtained from them, and in this direction the substitution of women doctors, which has already proved so helpful, may be open to extension. Comprehensive estimation of the whole supply at the disposal of the three Committees shows, therefore, that the material remaining is capable of yielding only a very small number of men, and that the civilian public is already putting up with a marked shortage. This suggests inevitably that unless some difference is made in the methods of employment of the medical men when they have received commissions, some method, that is, which would enable economy to be effected, the public will have to ration itself as rigidly with regard to the ministrations of medicine as they have to with regard to cereal foods. Unfortunately, any real dearth of medical service in a country has a more lasting and worse effect on a population than a period of scarcity of food, for the latter, when remedied, is found to leave a far less lasting effect. The machinery for the distribution of food remains intact and soon returns to normal working, but the machinery for the maintenance of national health cannot be laid aside and suddenly resumed. This being so, it is obvious that we must look anxiously on all sides for economical plans in the employment of our medical personnel. Already most civilian communities are working their hardest to dispense with unnecessary medical aid, and every civilian hospital does, in addition to its ordinary medical work, extraordinary work of a military nature, performing the increased duties with a decreased personnel. Already the medical administration of many public authorities is shorthanded, and, magnificent as the substitution work of the recently qualified women who have taken men's places has been, there is no doubt that much valuable preventive and sanitary organisation has been arrested in its development. Therefore, it is inevitable that we should find the eyes of many fixed on the Army, with the question on their lips whether the military needs cannot in any way be made less by some reforms in the employment of the medical material already supplied.

We have in these columns pointed out over and over again, in reply to ill-considered criticisms of the medical administration of the Army, that local must not be taken as an indication of general conditions. Time after time we have had communications from correspondents saying that at a certain time in a certain place there appeared to be a certain number of medical officers whose work was very light, and that if this was the state of affairs which prevailed throughout the Army, there could be no wonder at a position of shortage being quickly reached. For these critics