

regarded as a war measure, the fee for such notifications should be reserved from 1s. to 2s. 6d. forthwith; and that the President of the Local Government Board be so informed.

The committee regret that medical men as a class should be marked out for a decrease of remuneration in such times as these. I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Staple House, Chancery-lane, W.C.,
March 10th, 1919.

B. A. RICHMOND,
Secretary.

A PUBLIC DENTAL SERVICE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your issue of March 8th you commented, in a leading article dealing with the report of the Departmental Committee on Dental Practice, on the proposal to establish a Public Dental Service. Sect. XII., par. 135 of the Departmental report runs as follows:—

"If it is accepted that it is the duty of the State to ensure, in the national interest, that its citizens shall be maintained in a state of good health and working efficiency, we have no hesitation in stating that adequate arrangements for keeping the teeth of the people in a sound condition are one of the essentials to this end."

The report then proceeds to consider the matter under two headings: (1) treatment for children; (2) treatment for adults. With the former I do not propose to deal, but with reference to the latter I would call your attention to an article written by me, and published in *Public Health* of April last year; this was reprinted in the *British Dental Journal* in the following September, and has caused considerable interest and controversy, owing chiefly to the fact that the appalling condition of the mouths of the masses of the population was not appreciated by many of the correspondents, who mostly objected to the comparatively small provision made for conservative dentistry and the emphasis laid on the extraction of septic teeth, to furnish a clean mouth, and the provision of dentures.

Now in this report it is expressly stated that—

"Satisfactory conservative treatment of the teeth of the present adult population is not possible owing to past neglect; a large amount of dental work is, however, needed for extractions and the provision of dentures."

The scheme drawn up by me was the result of considerable experience as a command dental inspector in the Army, I having been chiefly instrumental in bringing about the reorganisation of the dental treatment in the service. This was accomplished by taking the work out of the hands of the civilian dentist, which was both unsatisfactory and expensive, and undertaking all the work by whole-time Army officers. The pivot of the scheme was a large central workshop for the provision of dentures, and dental officers with clinics in the camps and towns where troops were stationed, the impressions and bites being taken in the clinic and sent through the post to the central workshop and the finished denture returned to the clinic. This method of centralising mechanic work proved a great success so far as speed, efficiency, and economy were concerned, and the workshop in my command produced about 80,000 dentures in three years, all of a very high character.

In my original article I gave, with permission of the War Department, my balance-sheet for two years' working, showing that these dentures had been made at a workshop cost of 7s. 6d. each, and in certain months this had been as low as 5s. 6d., and I pointed out that with a larger turnover this could be reproduced under civil control. I then proceeded to sketch a scheme for a State service, showing how, if these were sold for 15s. each to the public, the surplus of payments over cost would be sufficient to run a service, doing extractions and fillings free of charge, without going to the Treasury for a grant. I purposely "sailed as near the wind" as possible, "keeping my figures and estimates as low as I could, so as to arrest attention and cause controversy, and in this I succeed beyond expectation. As an answer to criticisms one of my dental officers, Mr. Percy Millican, and my-elf recast my balance-sheet, and in an article published under his name in the *British Dental Journal* of Feb. 15th last, we have what I believe to be a scheme, sound financially, stable, and one that would be acceptable to the majority of the profession. This, with certain extracts from the paper, I append.

The following is an estimated prospectus for an area dentally served by a series of clinics, under the same

inspectorate, with a central workshop capable of supplying 70,560 dentures for 42,336 patients, and completing 212,562 fillings per annum.

Receipts.	£	Expenditure.	£
70,560 Dentures at £1 10s. ...	105,840	2 Inspectors, salary at £900 ...	1,800
212,562 fillings without fee ...	—	Insurances for pensions and sickness ...	650
		20 senior dentists at £600 ...	12,000
		Insurances, bonus and sickness ...	2,000
		50 junior dentists at £450 ...	22,500
		Insurances, bonus, and sickness ...	4,000
		* Mechanics' pay, bonuses, and insurance ...	29,240
		Upkeep of surgeries ...	6,000
		Upkeep of workshop ...	1,000
		Cost of materials ...	17,640
		Central administration ...	2,000
		Balance ...	7,010
	£105,840		£105,840

* Mechanics' Pay, &c.

Workshop superintendent, salary at £450, pension, and sickness insurance ...	£20
Ten foremen mechanics at £250, pensions, and insurance ...	4,430
60 A class mechanics at £200, insurance for bonuses ...	14,560
40 B class mechanics at £156, insurance for bonuses ...	7,280
Sickness insurance for A and B mechanics ...	800
20 A class boys at £35; 20 B class boys at £26; insurances for bonus and sickness ...	1,550
	£29,240

The points to be borne in mind in reading this prospectus are chiefly as follows:—

1. Each dentist works 33 hours a week, there being 49 weeks to the working year.
2. Each dentist doing conservative work only is able to average three fillings an hour.
3. The average time taken to prepare a mouth for dentures (fillings excepted) is one hour per patient.
4. A foreman mechanic assisted by ten mechanics and four boys can complete 144 dentures a week.
5. The average ratio of "prosthetic" patients to dentures is as 3 : 5 (some patients needing two).
6. The inspectors, workshop superintendent, and foremen mechanics would be life servants of the Service, retiring on a pension after 25 years' service, whereas the dentists and junior mechanics would contract for a limited period and receive a bonus on retirement, or the option of filling vacancies on the permanent staff.

If such a scheme were adopted under State guarantees we could in a limited number of years give clean mouths to the people, with the improvement in health and efficiency which your readers will appreciate, at the minimum cost to an overburdened Treasury. Its educating influence with the masses would be enormous, the improved professional outlook would attract the right class of student, the unqualified (to be taken on the Register) would work under a scientific inspectorate, to the advantage both to themselves and their patients, and, above all, the very elasticity of the scheme would allow a universal service to be built up which could, in the future, take over the necessarily increased conservative treatment for a dentally educated public, which, when dentures on this enormous scale were no longer needed, could be financed out of the insurance benefit by a very small additional contribution which the beneficiaries would, by then, be willing to pay.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

F. W. BRODERICK, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., L.D.S. ENG.,
Bournemouth, March 9th, 1919. Major, R.A.M.C.

TRIMETHENAL-ALLYL-CARBIDE IN INFLUENZA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—My attention was drawn to trimethenal-allyl-carbide, which is manufactured by Clement and Johnson, chemists, 13, Sicilian-avenue, London, and I was struck by their announcement that no complications occurred in influenza if this remedy were used early enough. So with a perfectly open mind I sent for half a gallon and began the treatment of all influenzas occurring amongst my staff at the Borough Sanatorium for Infectious Diseases and in those admitted as patients to that institution. My experience has been very limited, but I can certainly say that where the remedy was given during the first day or two of the disease there were no complications, and all made very satisfactory recovery. In such a terrible visitation as we had at that time (October to December, 1918) I felt glad to try a remedy that would act