

Inquiry Into Health Visiting.

Ministers Appoint Working Party.

THE MINISTERS OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION and the Secretary of State for Scotland have appointed a Working Party to advise on the proper field of work and the recruitment and training of health visitors in the National Health Service and School Health Service.

The chairman of the Working Party will be:—

Sir Wilson Jameson, M.D., F.R.C.P.

Its members are:—

Dr. A. Beauchamp, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., M.B., Ch.B.
(City of Birmingham Executive Council).

Alderman Mrs. K. Chambers, C.B.E., LL.D., J.P.
(Bradford City Council and Executive Council).

Miss E. G. Himsforth, R.G.N., S.C.M. (Nursing
Supervisor for Midlothian and Peebles).

Miss E. Stephenson, S.R.N., S.C.M. (Chief Nursing
Officer, Newcastle-upon-Tyne).

Dr. J. F. Warin, M.D., D.P.H. (Medical Officer of Health
and School Medical Officer, City of Oxford).

The Working Party will be advised by a Steering Committee, also under the Chairmanship of Sir Wilson Jameson, on which the Government Departments concerned will be represented. It will also represent the English and Scottish Associations of Local Authorities concerned and the London County Council; the Welsh Joint Education Committee and the Association of Education Committees; the Royal Sanitary Institute and the Standing Conference of Health Visitor Training Centres approved by the Minister of Health. It will also have the expert advice on social workers and their training of Miss Eileen Younghusband, M.B.E., J.P., and Professor R. M. Titmuss.

Health visitors are qualified nurses with extra training in midwifery, in public health and in the social services who, in the past, have been mainly concerned with advising mothers on their health and the health of their young children. The National Health Service Acts, however, envisaged a wider rôle for the health visitor covering the health of the whole family. Regulations made under the Education Acts in England and Wales also require that (save in certain specified cases) school nurses shall have the health visitors' qualification. The inquiry is expected to deal with the general position of the health visitor in these services in the light of experience now gained (including for example, ways in which she might co-operate with the family doctor and the hospitals) but not with services with which the appointing Ministers are not directly concerned.

The Joint Secretaries to the Inquiry are Mr. R. Pronger and Miss M. H. Cook, S.R.N. (Ministry of Health, Chesham House, Regent Street).

Work on the Inquiry will start this month.

Christmas Seals Remind Us . . .

THIS YEAR for the first time one hundred million Christmas Seals for use on letters and parcels will be issued by the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis as against the 1952 record number of eighty million. For over twenty years these gay little Christmas decorations have reminded people that tuberculosis is not yet finally conquered, and have brought help and encouragement to countless numbers of patients through the funds which have been obtained. Although the seals cost only a halfpenny each, some hundreds of thousands of pounds have been raised for the activities of the N.A.P.T. and for the work of local Care Committees during this period.

The 1953 Christmas Seal is a particularly gay and colourful design of the horn of plenty showering Christmas gifts. Each Seal bears the double-barred Red Cross—the international symbol of the fight against tuberculosis. The Seal

Sale opens on October 20th, and continues until Christmas. Supplies of seals, in sheets of 100 for 4s., and Christmas cards in two designs at 6s. per dozen (including envelopes) can be obtained from the Duchess of Portland, Chairman, N.A.P.T., Tavistock House North, London, W.C.1.

These cheerful Christmas Seals remind us that although there is still much to be done in the conquest of tuberculosis—there are about a quarter of a million sufferers in Great Britain today and nearly 300 people die of the disease every week—the situation is one of hopefulness.

For over fifty years N.A.P.T., through publications, conferences, the award of scholarships to doctors, nurses and social workers in this country and abroad, its Social Welfare department for the benefit of patients and their families, and its Art Therapy scheme now organised in 200 Sanatoria, has been in the forefront of the campaign. All these activities depend largely on the financial support of the Christmas Seal Sale.

How To Pay Your Doctor.

By Dr. W. Schweisheimer.

(Concluded from page 114).

PIERRE BRETONNEAU, born 1778, was a famous doctor in Tours with many peculiar ideas. He belonged to the large group of physicians who have reticence in matters of money and fees. They do not contempt money since they are aware that nobody can live without it, but they do feel uneasy about any connection of their professional services with payments. So they prefer not to send any bills at all. Asked to name his fee, Bretonneau would answer: "Give whatever you want to, with me it's the same way as in church. The rich will sacrifice whatever he wants and the poor whatever he can afford."

Even a Rothschild was not able to have a bill sent from Bretonneau for services rendered to his family. Eventually the Paris banker opened an account for Bretonneau and recorded there all the services, and thus a small capital with all the interest added, had accumulated.

Dr. Hermann M. Biggs was for years the trusted medical adviser of the Hill family in New York and the Adirondacks. James J. Hill never could induce Dr. Biggs to send a bill. He finally lost his patience and had his secretary write to the modest doctor: "By direction of Mr. James J. Hill I have today deposited in the Chase National Bank, New York, to your credit, one hundred thousand dollars."

Silverless Doctors.

The unusual behaviour of the two physicians (and later Saints) Cosmas and Damian was a great sensation at their time. Any fee was rigorously excluded from their code, they gave all their professional services free. They were called "Anagyroi," the Silverless Doctors. By the Roman Emperor Diocletian (284-305) they were sent to the Christian martyrs' death.

In ancient Rome sometimes very high medical fees were paid. Several physicians-in-ordinance to Roman emperors left a fortune of about 1½ million dollars when they died. Archiaters (public physicians) of the Imperial Palace were sometimes promoted to provincial governorships. C. Stertinus Xenophon who is supposed to have co-operated in poisoning the Emperor Claudius (by a meal of poisonous mushrooms or by a poisoned enema) bequeathed more than 1,760,000 dollars.

In the Middle Ages Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, decreed a medical fee schedule for Italy. Those 13th century doctors were bound to treat poor patients free of charge. They were permitted, however, to charge a fee up to 60 centimes a day for patients with means. The buying power of money in those centuries, up to the 16th century, was ten and twenty times that of today.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)