

Information will also continue to be available at Post Offices about medical benefit under the National Health Insurance scheme.

It is hoped that the new arrangements will help to call the attention of the general public to the scope of the local health services available and provide an easy and permanent means for finding out about a particular service which the inquirer needs.

As already announced, a national campaign for greater knowledge and fuller use of the health services is to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister on September 30th.

DENTAL INSPECTION AND TREATMENT URGED AS A STATUTORY BENEFIT.

Sir Kingsley Wood, the Minister of Health, recently received a deputation representing the British Dental Association, the Incorporated Dental Society and the Public Dental Service Association.

The deputation referred to the effect of dental defects and disease upon the health of all classes of the community, and emphasised the need for a comprehensive dental service as an essential sequel to the school dental service which would provide dental inspection and treatment for every insured person. This could only be made possible by means of a statutory dental benefit.

Sir Kingsley Wood said in reply that over 10,000,000 persons—two-thirds of the whole insured population of England and Wales—were already entitled to dental treatment as an additional benefit. It was clear that the cost of providing dental benefit as a statutory benefit would be very heavy and it would, of course, raise the question of an appropriate increase in the rates of contribution at present paid by insured persons and their employers. He was much impressed by the representations which the deputation had made, and promised to give them his careful consideration.

MINISTER OF HEALTH OPENS NEW MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Sir Kingsley Wood, the Minister of Health, recently opened the new Mental Hospital at Runwell, Essex, which has been provided jointly by the County Boroughs of East Ham and Southend-on-Sea.

The hospital has been erected at a cost of £650,000, and has been planned so as to combine all the previous advances in Mental Hospital design, including a separate Admission Hospital, four Research Laboratories, a general Library, and a Recreation Hall equipped with gymnastic apparatus. There is also an entirely new feature—a detached "Closed Unit" for disturbed cases.

CHANGED OUTLOOK.

Sir Kingsley Wood said that the national outlook towards mental disease had in recent years completely changed, and in no branch of public health services had there been such striking improvements in the methods of treatment. The old term "asylum" had been wiped off the statute book, and so had the term "lunatic," which was not only misleading but mischievous because it ignored the fact that there were many forms of mental disorders with different causes. Better still, great progress had been made in humanising mental hospitals, and the whole atmosphere and outlook was quite different from the days when mental disease was treated more like a criminal offence than anything else.

VOLUNTARY PATIENTS.

The provision in the Mental Treatment Act of 1930, whereby voluntary patients could be admitted to Public Mental Hospitals, had already produced remarkable results. In 1936, of the 25,000 patients admitted to Public Mental

Hospitals, nearly 27 per cent. were received on a voluntary footing.

MORE RESEARCH.

Far too little was known of the origin and causes of mental disorders, and there was grave need for more extensive and better organised research. A committee had recently been appointed under the chairmanship of Lord Radnor to consider how research could best be organised. It was hoped that the recommendations of this Committee would result in co-operation between the Mental Hospitals and the Universities and Medical Schools which would be beneficial to both.

SANITARY INSPECTORS' ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE.

Sir Leonard Hill, in his interesting presidential address to the Sanitary Inspectors' Association on August 31st, discussed the present decline in the population and said that if it continued, by 1941 there would not be any excess of births over deaths, and in 100 years the population of this country, now 41 million, would have fallen to 5,000,000.

The Ministry of Health was inquiring why people would not have babies. The answer was because they could not afford it. The well-to-do classes were breeding much less than those who were less well to do, and the intellectual quality of such children as were born might therefore be falling off. The less well to do were mainly responsible for the fall of the birth-rate, for they were much the more numerous. While it was right to control the number of children a family of at least three was required for maintenance. The finest traits of character, affection, sympathy, self-sacrifice, patience, and forgiveness were brought out by family life and children.

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION AND CHILD WELFARE.

The British Broadcasting Company, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, announce a number of interesting talks on Child Welfare. On September 24th, Mr. Edward Fuller will speak on "What the World is Doing for Its Children: The Future of Child Welfare," and, in October, a new series of Friday morning talks, "Before they go to School" will deal with the care of little children between the ages of 2 and 5. These talks should be of much interest to nurses.

FOOD EDUCATION SOCIETY.

Dr. M. Bircher-Benner, of Zurich, is to pay a return visit to this country on the invitation of the Food Education Society. He will give three addresses on "The Principles of Therapy according to the Laws of Life" at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, W.C.1, on Monday, October 25th, Wednesday, October 27th and Friday, October 29th, at 8 p.m. Major-General Sir Robert McCarrison, C.I.E., M.D., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.C.P., will preside at the first, and Captain G. S. Elliston, M.C., M.A., J.P., M.P., at the second. The titles of the lectures, which will be illustrated by lantern slides, will be: "We Do not Know why we fall ill," "The Hell of Ill-health" and "Return to the Realm of Health."

INFECTION FROM ABROAD.

A case of primary malaria, notified in Huddersfield in 1936, was mentioned in the Annual Report of Dr. J. M. Gibson, Medical Officer of Health. There is no danger of spread of infection in such a case, as it is conveyed by mosquitoes not found in the British Isles. He points out how the risk of infection has been increased by modern methods of transport; it is possible for infection to be picked up by a person in almost any part of the world, and to reach this country by aeroplane within the time necessary for the disease to incubate.

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