

## Improvements in T.B. Position.

### More Beds and Nurses—Fewer Deaths and Cases

FIGURES SHOWING BIG ADVANCES in the fight against T.B. were published recently by the Minister of Health. The number of beds and nurses has gone up, and there is a big fall in deaths from tuberculosis. New cases are also fewer.

In July, 1950, Hospital Boards were asked to make a special drive to bring beds into use for tuberculosis patients. In the six months up to the end of last year 761 new beds were provided and 386 re-opened, a total of 1,147. Since the National Health Service began in July, 1948, up to June, 1950, 1,506 new beds were opened and 897 re-opened, a total of 2,403. Altogether, 3,550 extra beds are in use, and there is the promise of more to come.

Nursing staff is also increasing. The year ending September 30th, 1950, saw 705 extra whole-time nurses and 153 part-time nurses recruited to the staffs of sanatoria and tuberculosis hospitals.

Deaths have decreased sharply. Provisional figures for the first six months of 1950 show a drop of 17.7 in the numbers compared with the same period in 1949. This is much larger than for many years past, and compares with a drop of 5.6 in the same periods of 1948 and 1949. Taking respiratory tuberculosis alone, the number of deaths fell by 1,671 (compared with 247) or 17.4 per cent. (compared with 2.5 per cent.). Much of the fall may be attributed to the increasing use of new methods of treatment such as streptomycin and para-amino-salicylic acid, but increased services have also played a part.

Of course, the returns for one half year must be interpreted with caution, but the gain is large enough to warrant the belief that new methods are beginning to show results. This is a time, states the Ministry, for redoubled effort to bring tuberculosis under control, not for relaxation.

The number of new cases is dropping too. For several years past notification of new cases have been increasing, mainly because of a rise in the number of respiratory tuberculosis cases. But provisional figures for 1950 show an overall drop of 5 per cent. and a drop of nearly 4 per cent. in respiratory cases, compared with a rise of 0.5 per cent. shown in the corresponding returns for respiratory cases in 1949 over 1948.

## The Royal Sanitary Institute.

THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS have been arranged by the Royal Sanitary Institute:—

**King's Lynn Sessional Meeting.**—Friday, March 9th, 1951, at 10 a.m. at the Guildhall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn. Papers on "River Pollution," by S. Greenburgh, Ph.D., B.Sc., F.R.I.C., Public Analyst, and "The Work of a Housing Manager in the Post-war Era," by Miss M. L. Keith, M.S.H.M., Housing Manager, King's Lynn. In the afternoon, a visit will be paid to Sandringham Estate, by kind permission of His Majesty the King. Chairman: Mr. C. B. Townend, B.Sc., M.I.C.E. (Member of the Council).

**London Sessional Meeting.**—Wednesday, March 14th, 1951, at 2.30 p.m., at the Institute. Discussion on "The Day Care of Children apart from their Parents," to be opened by Hugh Paul, M.D., D.P.H., Medical Officer of Health, Smethwick; Gertrude Willoughby, M.A., D.de l'Université (Paris), Lecturer, Social Science Department, London School of Economics and Political Science, and Hilda Menzies, M.D., D.P.H., Senior Medical Officer, Essex C.C. Chairman: Sir W. Allen Daley, M.D., F.R.C.P., D.P.H. (Vice-President).

**London Sessional Meeting.**—Wednesday, May 23rd, 1951, at 2.30 p.m., at the Institute. Paper on "The Pimlico District Heating Scheme," by A. E. Margolis, Dip.Ing.

**London Sessional Meeting.**—Wednesday, June 13th, 1951, at 2.30 p.m., at the Institute. Discussion on "Planning for the Care of the Aged and Chronic Sick," to be opened by D. A. Goldfinch, Dip.T.P. (Leeds), F.R.I.B.A., Architect to the Birmingham Regional Hospital Board.

## Volunteers for Northern Ireland Hospitals.

### Fighting the Influenza Epidemic.

HOW PUBLIC-SPIRITED citizens of Northern Ireland have rallied to the aid of the Hospitals in fighting the present Influenza epidemic was told in a statement issued by the Northern Ireland Hospitals Authority recently.

The incidence of influenza has been very heavy, resulting in an abnormally high demand for hospital beds. Moreover a very high proportion of the Nursing and other staffs of Hospitals have fallen victims to the outbreak. Responding to an appeal for help, over 100 volunteers came forward and it was thus possible to open a 60-bed unit at the Northern Ireland Fever Hospital and a few beds at the Throne Hospital, Belfast. Hospitals outside Belfast also received valuable help from the volunteers.

Those who offered their services were trained Nurses (formerly in the Nursing Service), partially trained Nurses and other persons with a certain amount of nursing experience. Persons with no such experience helped with clerical and other forms of hospital work. Organised parties of ladies from the staffs of public departments, shops and offices came forward: so did many housewives who had to make arrangements for other persons to look after their children.

One Englishman sent to Belfast by a Dublin firm found that his job could not start for several days. He therefore answered the call of the hospitals and assisted in the kitchens. This voluntary help, says the Hospitals Authority, has been of real assistance in dealing with the influenza epidemic.

## News from South Africa.

### A Hospital's Useful Sheep.

A DOZEN MERINO EWES and a ram are estimated by the Medical Superintendent of Tara Hospital, on the South African Rand, to be saving it £400 a year for native labour and £20 for a lawnmower's petrol and maintenance, besides contributing wool worth £30 a year and manure values at £50.

The animals graze on 12 acres of lawns and playing fields. They provide wool for purposes of occupational therapy. The superintendent has recommended to the hospital board that another dozen be bought.

To cope with the serious shortage of nurses, especially in mental and isolation hospitals, a recruitment campaign to attract newcomers from overseas is being planned by South Africa's Health Department.

The prevailing staffing position in mental hospitals is described by health authorities as "desperate." In one, with an authorised establishment of 16 sisters and 99 nurses there are vacancies for one sister and 80 nurses! A woman's ward with more than 50 while patients is being staffed by one sister, one nurse and three coloured maids, all of whom are on duty for far longer than they should be, in a plucky attempt to achieve the impossible.

Probably the first midwife in the world to have a public park named after her is a Japanese woman of 77, thus honoured in a small town of Nagasaki Prefecture.

A midwife for 56 years, she has attended the birth of more than 20,000 children. For about half of these attendances she made no charge, as the parents were very poor.

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