

## England and Wales.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

### MANCHESTER AND DISTRICT.

#### MEDICAL AID IN STREET ACCIDENTS.

SOME recent events have shown that it is high time that some uniform arrangements were made throughout the country for the proper recognition of the services of medical men when called to accidents or cases of sudden illness in the streets. A few weeks ago, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, Mr. Asquith stated that in London a fee of 3s. 6d. was paid for cases occurring between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and 7s. 6d. between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m., and also that for giving evidence about such cases in the police courts 10s. 6d. was paid if within two miles of the doctor's residence and 2s. 6d. for each additional mile, with a maximum total fee of 21s. But it appears that there is no such arrangement in the great majority of our large towns, and practically nowhere in the country districts. Hitherto authorities have simply trusted to the humanitarian feelings of medical men, and it has very rarely happened that proper medical assistance has not been readily available, even though in most places every medical man knows quite well that in three cases out of four he will never be paid for his trouble. When an accident occurs everybody is ready to run for a doctor, but it often happens afterwards that everybody, even including the patient, denies any liability. It is a fact that the police in some towns have had instructions not themselves to send for a doctor; irresponsible bystanders may do so, and the police are then not liable. It is by no means uncommon for every doctor in the neighbourhood to be called, and in a short time three or four arrive on the scene only to find that the case was a trifling one or that some other doctor has already attended to it, and none of them receive anything for their trouble, though they may have been called away from a surgery full of private patients. The public has been educated to regard services thus voluntarily given without remuneration as a right which it can claim at any time. And though a doctor may have gone to half a dozen cases which have turned out to be trifling, and for which he has never been paid, if by any chance he fails to go to a case which proves serious, he is at once branded as inhumane, even by people who would pass by an accident on the other side of the street. That this is no imaginary picture is seen from a case which has recently occurred at West Hartlepool, where Dr. Morgan, a well-known practitioner, and the last man in the town who should be charged with inhumanity, has been pilloried in the public press for failing to attend an accident in the streets. It appears that he had no intimation that the case was of a serious nature, nor has it even been proved that it was possible for him to attend, and, what is far worse, he had no opportunity of attending at the inquest afterwards to rebut charges made against him. Several cases similar to the above have occurred in Manchester and Salford, and representations have from time to time been made to the authorities. It is satisfactory to state the joint committee of the Manchester and Salford Divisions has now been officially informed by the solicitor to the town clerk of Manchester that the scale of fees paid to the police surgeons "applies also to ordinary medical men when called in by the police to cases of accident or sudden illness in the streets." This scale is 3s. 6d. for attending by day and 7s. 6d. by night, with a fee of 21s. for attendance in the police court to give evidence. The official intimation however continues:

I may add that it very rarely happens that it is necessary for the police to call in ordinary medical men, as by an arrangement with the Telephone Company the police officers can use any telephone, and by this means obtain the services of the police surgeons and horse ambulances in which to convey patients to the infirmary quicker than they could obtain the services of other medical men.

For Salford, the Chief Constable writes: "The fees payable to medical men for attending street accidents in the borough or attending court are upon the same basis as those quoted by Mr. Asquith," that is, the same as given

above for London. Tramway accidents are in a different category, the arrangement being that the Salford Tramways Claims Department will pay 5s. for first aid in any tram accident, but the claim for the fee must be accompanied by a short report of the injuries and any statement the patient may have made with respect to the accident. For first aid alone 3s. 6d. has generally been paid.

It is evident that until some similar arrangement has been made universal throughout the country, there will be constant dissatisfaction; and nothing but an organized demand for the matter to be put on a business-like footing will prevent a repetition of the unfortunate event at West Hartlepool.

### WALES.

#### THE EBBW VALE DISPUTE.

THE Ebbw Vale dispute seems to grow more and more confused. The following paragraph, which we quote from the *South Wales Daily News* of May 4th, describes what, as far as we know, is its latest phase:

The Ebbw Vale Workmen's Doctor's Fund dispute, having existed over three years, is now as far off settlement as ever. A meeting of the Cwm and Wainlwyd section was held at the Public Hall, Cwm, on Monday evening, May 3rd, when Mr. F. Griffiths presided over a large attendance. The chairman, in his opening remarks, gave a summary of the proceedings that had taken place since the signing of the original agreement, and said that the manner in which the second ballot was taken was unfair, and was an insult to the intelligence of the voters. The ballot boxes had been carried about by persons deeply interested in the result; and while he did not attribute any unjust motive, it was nevertheless not above suspicion. It was decided to instruct the solicitor to proceed for the recovery from the fund of the money awarded by Judge Owen in the county court to the Cwm section, and that, as far as the future was concerned, that matters be left in the hands of the committee to proceed in the best and most speedy way to recover what have been incurred since, and that an injunction be applied for.

### Scotland.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

#### DUNDEE AND ITS SANATORIUM.

DUNDEE has missed an opportunity of honour. For some years it has, in dealing with phthisis, pursued a policy which has developed gradually through the stages of sputum examination, voluntary notification, and the establishment of a municipal dispensary. Last autumn the medical officer of health, in his report as a delegate to the International Congress on Tuberculosis, developed a scheme for the complete management of the phthisis problem. The main provisions of this were compulsory notification, municipalization and development of the Sidlaw Sanatorium, and segregation of incurable cases. The sanatorium with its forty beds was to be handed over as a free gift, but without endowment, and the financial burdens involved were estimated to require a rate of 2d. The Convener of the Health Committee met this scheme with enthusiasm and almost too great energy, and succeeded in carrying it through unmodified up to a point at which the transfer agreement had been signed, and the transaction could be closed by securing the sanction of the Local Government Board, which had been promised in advance, and the assent of the Scottish Secretary. Unfortunately, the matter had become complicated by personal questions, and by a proposal to redress an old grievance, due to the astuteness of an ancient official, which confers on Dundee the distinction of being the only place where the health-rate falls entirely on the occupier. The new rate was to be called the sanatorium rate, and was to fall equally on owner and occupier. This evoked the hostility of certain interests which were eventually successful in expressing so much public opposition that the town council which at first passed the scheme with only three dissentients, eventually at a special meeting asked the directors to cancel the agreement. That Dundee has thrown away the honour of being the first city in the kingdom to own a sanatorium for phthisis is a matter of less serious import than the unawakened public conscience it has revealed in the process. This seems to foreshadow neglect, as, of the two other ways in which the phthisis problem may be met, being more probable than a root