

the related parts of the National Health Service which came under the local authorities. Each of these councils would have power to determine remuneration and all other conditions concerning people within its group. The Central Council would have no kind of suzerainty over the others, but it would deal with any question which directly concerned more than one functional group. One of the first things to be done under the Whitley procedure would be to agree about arbitration arrangements to deal with what it was hoped would be the exceptional cases in which agreement was not obtained within the council organization itself. In the nurses' and midwives' council there would be, on the employers' side, representatives of the Ministry of Health, the Department of Health for Scotland, the Regional Hospital Boards, the local authorities associations, and the boards of governors of teaching hospitals; on the employees' side the Royal College of Nursing would have twelve seats, the Royal College of Midwives six, and the major trade unions four, with appropriate representation for some of the smaller groups.

In answer to questions Mr. Mayne said it was definite that no condition would be attached to the contract under the National Health Service whereby members of the nursing profession would be required to join a trade union organization. Asked about the position of the matron, he said that at the hospital level, where the matron was a departmental head, she would be on the employers' side of the council, but at regional level the employees' side would be represented by the Royal College, which embraced all grades, including matrons, and the matron there would be on the employees' side. The Whitley Councils, he hoped, would deal with more than remuneration; they would have generally in view the increased efficiency of the public service combined with the well-being of those employed. The Civil Service had had 27 years' experience of "Whitleyism," and many suggestions had come from the staff side concerning the running of the Service. In industry, however, this aspect had been detached from the negotiating machinery and had taken the form of joint production committees.

The work of the conference was summed up by its chairman, Mr. Raymond Parmenter, director of the Administrative Staff College, to whose skill in the conduct of the proceedings was due much of the success of the conference.

## DENTAL SERVICES DISPUTE WITH THE MINISTER

The Representative Board of the British Dental Association on Jan. 31 adopted a resolution advising all members of the Association to exercise their right under the National Health Service Act, 1946, to refuse to enter the Service until the Act and its regulations had been so amended as to include the principles advocated by the Association as essential to the provision of "a satisfactory dental service for the nation." This resolution was adopted by 85 votes to 4, and a further resolution expressed the willingness of the B.D.A. to continue its discussions with the Minister to enable the Act and its regulations to be amended.

The findings of the Dental Spens Committee have not yet been announced and so the B.D.A. has not considered details of remuneration. Its objections are based entirely on points of principle. In a statement issued on the same day by the B.D.A. it was asserted that the provisions of the Act would curtail the dentist's clinical freedom and cause a lowering of the standard of treatment. The Association objected to the Minister's power to dispense with any requirements of the regulations governing the general dental service, and it insisted that there should be a right of final appeal to the High Court against the removal of a dental practitioner's name from the list. The Association suggested that the method of remuneration on which the Minister insists—payment of a fixed fee for each item of treatment, irrespective of any special skill employed or the amount of time involved—would put a premium on hurried and shoddy work. The Association would prefer a system of grant-in-aid with a fixed payment from the Ministry for each operation and complete freedom for the

patient and dentist to arrive at an additional fee "according to the standard of skill, effort, experience, and amenities provided."

In the light of the experience of the Negotiating Committee a significant part of this statement is: "The way in which the Minister of Health on Nov. 25, 1947, refused all concessions on principles advanced by the profession makes it evident that he intends to enforce a system of panel dentistry for all."

### Memorandum by the Minister

In reply to this statement by the B.D.A. the Ministry of Health sent to the 15,000 dentists in England, Scotland, and Wales a Memorandum by the Minister. The Memorandum is not as elaborate as that which was sent to the medical profession, but follows much the same lines of argument. There is an appeal to individual dentists and a broad outline of how the scheme will work. Local Dental Committees constituted by the profession itself for the same areas as the Executive Councils will appoint dentists to serve on those Councils. Any dentist can take part in the Service or not, as he wishes. He will also retain the right to private practice. Patients will have complete freedom of choice of dentist. When the patient approaches a dentist the first record will be on a "dental estimate form" which will include the patient's signature to a statement that he desires treatment under the Service; the dentist's formal acceptance of the patient; a chart of the patient's mouth; and an estimate of the treatment required. All normal conservative treatment will not need any prior authority. Prior authority will have to be obtained from the Dental Estimates Board for the provision of dentures, extensive and prolonged treatment of the gums, gold fillings, inlays, crowns, special appliances, and oral surgery. The Dental Consultative Committee suggested that all applicants for dental treatment should be required to undergo all the treatment needed to make them dentally fit. The Minister does not agree that it would be right "to deprive a person who is unwilling to undergo full treatment of a service which is designed to be available to the whole community and which is provided at the expense of public funds." Dentists will be asked to keep records, and dental officers of the Ministry "must be able to inspect surgeries and waiting-rooms after giving due notice."

The Memorandum by the Minister also outlines the procedure for dealing with complaints and disputes. There is provision for the setting up of a tribunal consisting of a lawyer as chairman, a dental member, and a lay member. If the tribunal decides against the dentist he may appeal to the Minister.

### Rejoinder

Replying to this Memorandum the B.D.A. stated that "until Mr. Bevan retracts from his intransigent and inflexible attitude the dental profession will exercise its right to refuse to enter a service which will lower the high standard of dental treatment to a utility level." The B.D.A. in other words has reiterated its considered opinion that the general dental service outlined by the Minister "will not and cannot result in a satisfactory service for the public."

### LADY TATA MEMORIAL TRUST

The Trustees of the Lady Tata Memorial Fund invite applications for grants and scholarships for research in diseases of the blood, with special reference to leukaemia, in the academic year beginning on Oct. 1. Grants of variable amount are made for research expenses or to provide scientific assistants to senior workers. Scholarships are awarded as personal remuneration; their normal value has been £400 per annum for whole-time research, with proportionate adjustment for work on a part-time basis where this has been approved. Applications must be submitted before March 31, and the awards will be announced by the Trustees in June. Further particulars and forms of application may be obtained from the secretary of the Scientific Advisory Committee, c/o Medical Research Council, 38, Old Queen Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1. The grants and scholarships are open to workers of any nationality, and in any country in which it will be possible to make payments in the coming academic year. The available information on this point regarding particular countries outside the sterling area will be supplied to intending applicants on request.

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