

be made on account of medical fees why cannot an allowance be made on account of maintenance?

Patients have no means of ascertaining the correctness of the figure they are charged for maintenance, and the amount of the charges, which vary so widely, would appear to depend on the particular finance officer's interpretation of the regulations. Whether or not his calculations are subject to critical examination by the Government auditors is not known.

Whether or not standard charges throughout the country could be arranged, common justice would appear to require that private patients should be credited with the amount saved the Exchequer by the non-exercise of their right to treatment in a general-ward bed. Unfortunately, general-ward beds and private beds in some hospitals are so hard to come by that patients with a right to "free" treatment are driven to accept treatment in nursing-homes entirely at their own expense; for such there would appear to be no redress at all.

Summed up, the situation appears to indicate inability of the National Health Service to provide the beds, plus a well-understood policy of our present legislators to "soak the (alleged) rich."—I am, etc.,

JOHN DODD,

Bristol.

Secretary, Western Provident Association for
Hospital and Nursing Home Services, Ltd.

New Source of Money

SIR,—One of the difficulties of the Minister in meeting what all must recognize as legitimate demands for increase of the central pool is the necessity for asking the Treasury for more funds, when the utmost restraint has been urged by the Chancellor. I am wondering if in fact the demands can be met without any apparent increase in the Health Service expenditure.

No one can doubt that a large proportion of the general practitioner's work is done for the Ministry of National Insurance. It is also a fact that in the past six years this Ministry has shown a surplus of £700m. Would it not therefore be logical to ask that the extra money which the profession is demanding should be taken from the Ministry of National Insurance? Let it be assumed that there are twelve million contributors (I believe it is in fact greatly in excess of this), then 2½d. per week from the contributions would realize over £6½ m. a year.

It may well be that this solution has been already explored, but it would appear to relieve the embarrassment of raising extra taxes, and even if the 2½d. *did* have to be added to the existing contribution it would be no worse than the previous threat of a shilling per prescription, which was estimated to raise £10m.—I am, etc.,

Newport Pagnell, Bucks.

A. A. CLAY.

Standing Together

SIR,—When the National Health Insurance Act Medical Benefit began, one of the commissioners remarked, "You doctors could get anything you wanted if you all stood together, but, thank goodness, you don't." There is no reason to think things have changed in this respect. So long as doctors clamour for new patients, and accept all who come, the Minister of Health has some justification for thinking the remuneration is adequate.

As for penalizing patients who treat their doctor heartlessly, the doctor can ask for their removal from his list, a procedure which will have more weight with the Minister than any other, the doctor treating the patient with courtesy in the interval.

There would be some economies if the purchase tax were paid by the patient, and things like aspirin forbidden except for patients seen personally, and then the number limited to two dozen.—I am, etc.,

Wiltshire, near Blackburn.

ARTHUR H. GREGSON.

Association Notices

Diary of Central Meetings

APRIL

- 16 Mon. Armed Forces Committee, 2 p.m.
- 16 Mon. Joint Committee, Subcommittee on Merit Awards, 3 p.m.
- 17 Tues. Building Committee, 2 p.m.
- 17 Tues. Organization Committee, 2 p.m.
- 18 Wed. Joint Committee, Subcommittee on Registrars (at Ministry of Health), 10.30 a.m.
- 18 Wed. Film Committee, 2 p.m.
- 18 Wed. Staffing Committee, 2 p.m. (followed by Office Committee).
- 18 Wed. Finance Committee, 2.30 p.m.
- 19 Thurs. Chairman's Advisory Subcommittee, General Medical Services Committee, 10.30 a.m.
- 19 Thurs. Dermatologists Group Committee, 10.30 a.m.
- 19 Thurs. Joint Formulary Committee, 2 p.m.
- 19 Thurs. Occupational Health Committee, 2 p.m.
- 19 Thurs. Staff Side Committee C, 2.15 p.m.
- 20 Fri. Full-time Non-professional Medical Teachers and Research Workers Group Committee, 2 p.m.
- 20 Fri. Public Health Committee, 2 p.m.
- 23 Mon. Conference of Regional Officers, 2 p.m.
- 25 Wed. Welsh Committee (at Raven Hotel, Shrewsbury), 2.15 p.m.
- 26 Thurs. Publishing Subcommittee, 11 a.m.
- 26 Thurs. General Medical Services Committee, Deputation to the Ministry of Health, 3 p.m.
- 27 Fri. Amending Acts Committee, 2 p.m.
- 27 Fri. Committee on Psychiatry and the Law, 2 p.m.
- 27 Fri. Venereologists Group Committee, 2.30 p.m.

MAY

- 2 Wed. Council, 10 a.m.
- 3 Thurs. Otolaryngologists Group Committee, 2 p.m.
- 3 Thurs. Conference of Otolaryngologists Group, 3 p.m.
- 7 Mon. Amending Acts Committee, 2 p.m.
- 9 Wed. Public Relations Committee, 2 p.m.
- 18 Fri. Amending Acts Committee, 2 p.m.

Branch and Division Meetings to be Held

CAMBRIDGE AND HUNTINGDON DIVISION.—At Lecture Room, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, Friday, April 20, 2.45 p.m., annual general meeting.

COVENTRY DIVISION.—Tuesday, April 17, general practitioners evening.

GUILDFORD DIVISION.—At St. Peter's Hospital, Chertsey, Friday, April 20, 7.30 p.m., clinical meeting.

MONMOUTHSHIRE DIVISION.—At St. Mellons County Club, Thursday, April 19, 7.45 for 8.15 p.m., dinner; annual B.M.A. lecture by Dr. Robert Forbes: "Legal Hazards in Medical Practice."

NORTH OF ENGLAND BRANCH.—At New Lecture Theatre, Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Thursday, April 19, 7.15 p.m., clinical demonstration by Mr. W. A. Hewitson: "Cases of Rectal Haemorrhage"; 8.45 p.m., address by Mr. A. Dickson Wright: "Varicose Veins and Their Treatment."

ST. PANCRAS DIVISION.—At B.M.A. House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C., Friday, April 20, 8.30 p.m., lecture by Dr. Alistair French: "Legal and Ethical Aspects of Medical Practice."

STRATFORD DIVISION.—At Queen Mary's Hospital, Stratford, Tuesday, April 17, 8.30 p.m., Dr. William Evans: "Unwarranted Cardiac Invalidism."

WANDSWORTH DIVISION.—At Bolingbroke Hospital, Bolingbroke Grove, Wandsworth Common, London, S.W., Sunday, April 22, 10.30 a.m., clinical meeting.

Correction

In the *Supplement* of March 10 (p. 80) we inadvertently referred to the island of St. Eustatius as Eustatius.