

students. He died of aneurysm of the aorta in 1847 in his fifty-third year. There are various portraits and busts of him in existence, but it is now proposed to commemorate him in the church of which his father was minister. The general proposal is that two small windows in the gable of the new chancel (which would always be prominently seen in the church) be filled with stained glass, and that a memorial brass bearing a suitable inscription be erected in the porch. The Parish Church of Ecclesmachan is an ancient ecclesiastical building, and is situated in the centre of a district of great historical interest, being twelve miles west of Edinburgh, and four miles east of the ancient town of Linlithgow, the Scottish Windsor. It is not expected that the total expenditure of the stained glass and brass will greatly exceed the modest sum of £65. Contributions will be received and information supplied by the Rev. Alex. Brown Grant, B.D., Minister of Ecclesmachan, Uphall, N.B.

THE WORLD'S BIRTH-RATE AND DEATH-RATE.

TAKING the first six years of the present century, the birth-rate of the various countries shows a very considerable range. While in France and Ireland there were respectively 21 and 23 children born for every 1,000 inhabitants, there are countries where this rate is almost doubled. Thus in European Russia and Bulgaria the rate was 41 per mille, in Serbia and Roumania 39, in Hungary 37, in Austria 35, and in Germany 34. In Spain, Italy, Portugal, Mexico, the South American Republics, and Japan the rate varies between 32 and 35, while in England and the Scandinavian countries it is as low as 26 and 28.5. Turning to the death-rate, we find that France and Germany alike show an average of 20 per mille. The countries of highest mortality are Mexico (33.7), European Russia (31.6), Chile (30.5), Spain and Hungary (26), Roumania (25.4), Austria (24.4), Bulgaria (22.7), and Italy (22.2), and those of the smallest are England and Holland (16), Sweden (15.5), Denmark (14.9), Norway (14.7), and New Zealand (9.8). Speaking generally, it may be said that the death-rate is steadily falling in all the European countries.

We regret to announce the death of Sir Thomas Stevenson, M.D., senior scientific analyst to the Home Office, which occurred on July 27th at the age of 70. We hope to publish a notice of his career in a later issue.

On July 28th the President and Vice-Presidents of the Royal College of Surgeons sent a letter to Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson, Past-President of the College, congratulating him on the completion of his 80th year. In the name of the Council of the College they express their sense of the importance of Mr. Hutchinson's varied and valuable contributions and of his untiring devotion to the profession of which he is so prominent and brilliant a member. We are sure we are expressing the feeling of the whole profession in echoing these sentiments and in most heartily wishing a man who has thrown light into so many dark corners of pathology and who has shed so much lustre on British surgery, *Ad plurimos annos!*

THE Secretary of the Metropolitan Hospital Sunday Fund informs us that up to July 25th the total to date is about £40,000.

Medical Notes in Parliament.

[FROM OUR LOBBY CORRESPONDENT.]

The Irish Universities Bill occupied Thursday and Friday of last week in its report stage, and was read a third time on Saturday. During the report stage many amendments were moved and many divisions taken, but little change was made in the measure. Sir William Collins tried to give external students recognition for degrees, but Mr. Birrell refused to grant this, as it would practically set up the Royal University in a new form, and the amendment found little support. The Nonconformist attack in one direction required residence for two years in a constituent college of one of the universities; this was Dr. Hazel's amendment, and led to an animated debate, but was rejected by a majority of 141. Mr. Massie was more successful in the other direction by his amendment to leave out the subsection which allowed the erection by private benefaction of a church or chapel within the precincts of the university or college, and he carried the omission by a majority of 61. Mr. C. Craig endeavoured to obtain representation of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland on the Commission, but Mr. Birrell was unable to accede to the proposal. He said that both the Prime Minister and himself had been approached by the Royal College, and the Prime Minister had stated that the charters would provide for a full recognition of the classes and the schools, and that in that sense the college could not be damaged by the establishment of the new university. He had also stated that if it were proved after a time that the Royal College had suffered materially by the competition, it would be a subject for the favourable consideration of the Exchequer. On this statement the amendment was withdrawn. On Saturday the third reading was passed, and shortly afterwards the bill was read a first time in the House of Lords.

Exemption from Vaccination.—Last week Mr. John Burns stated, in answer to Mr. Lupton, that the number of exemption certificates recorded by vaccination officers in 1907 amounted to 57,675.

London Ambulances.—Mr. Cooper asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he was aware that during the sitting of the Departmental Committee on London ambulances litter ambulances, amounting to more than 100 were placed in the streets of London; whether he would state by whose authority these ambulances were placed in the streets; how much was the total cost; and whether this cost would be a charge upon the rates. Mr. Secretary Gladstone replied that a large number of litter ambulances had been placed in the streets by his authority; some were authorized before the appointment of the Committee, others since its sittings commenced. The cost of a wheeled litter with the appliances and shelter was £35 14s. 6d. This was defrayed out of the Metropolitan Police Fund.

The Notification of Tuberculosis.—Sir William Collins asked the President of the Local Government Board in how many cases parliamentary powers had been given to local authorities in England and Wales enabling them to require the notification of tuberculosis by medical men under penalty; whether such powers had been given in respect of tuberculosis of the lung only, or in respect of any form of tuberculosis; whether such powers had been given in any cases for more than a limited period of time; in how many cases had voluntary systems of notification of tuberculosis been adopted; and whether the results obtained under a voluntary system had compared favourably with those obtained under a compulsory system. Mr. John Burns answered that parliamentary powers had been given in two such cases, viz., Sheffield and Bolton. In both cases the powers had been given in respect of tuberculosis of the lung only, and for a limited period. He was aware of about 150 cases in which voluntary systems of notification of tuberculosis had been adopted or tried in England and Wales, and there might possibly be others. It could not, he thought, be expected that under ordinary

circumstances a voluntary system of notification would secure as early or complete notification of cases as would a compulsory system, and the preponderant experience in England and Wales appeared to confirm this expectation.

Death from Vaccination at Fenton.—Mr. Lupton last week called the attention of the President of the Local Government Board to a death following vaccination at Fenton, and inquired as to the report made on the case by the medical inspector. Mr. John Burns said that he was aware of this case, which had recently been investigated by one of the medical inspectors of the Local Government Board. Owing to the death of the public vaccinator, the evidence which the inspector was able to obtain was incomplete, but it went to show that the lymph used was not in fault. Further, it appeared that the arm had been improperly treated by the mother, and that the sanitary conditions of the dwellings were very bad. The inspector thought it probable that these circumstances must be held responsible for the infection of the arm, to which the fatal termination of the case was attributable. The inspector's report was a confidential document, and was only made for the information of the board.

Poor-law Reform in Ireland.—Mr. Devlin asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any steps had yet been taken to prepare a scheme of Poor-law reform on the lines laid down in the Viceregal Commission Report; if not, whether he would see that in the preparation of that scheme the opinion of persons who have had practical experience of the working of the Irish Poor Laws and of Poor-law administration would be invited; and whether he would urge the immediate preparation of such a scheme. Mr. Birrell replied that the Local Government Board were at present engaged in shaping the general outlines of a scheme; but until the Report of the Royal Commission was before them and the question of the future areas of rating was definitely determined it would not be possible to fill in the details of any scheme with sufficient completeness to enable them to submit it to the local authorities.

The Belfast Health Commission.—Last week Mr. Devlin questioned the Chief Secretary as to the results of this Commission, and Mr. Birrell said that since the appointment of the Commission referred to the Local Government Board had had evidence of increased activity in the public health administration of Belfast, and the corporation had already taken steps to remedy some of the sanitary defects which were brought under the notice of the Commission. Many important recommendations were made by the Commission, and, as he had already stated, the corporation must be allowed a reasonable time for action before the Local Government Board could take steps in the matter. The matter would not be lost sight of.

Female Medical Officers and the Post Office.—Mr. Field asked the Postmaster-General whether the compulsory retirement of Miss Bradley some months ago was persisted in because of the recommendation of a Post Office female medical officer of minor qualifications, notwithstanding the certificate of a specialist, Sir William Gowers; whether Miss Bradley pressed for an independent medical examination by a doctor to be nominated by the Post Office; and, if so, why her request was not acceded to; and whether, as she was now quite well, he would reinstate her. Mr. Sydney Buxton replied that he had nothing to add to the information which he gave to his honourable friend by letter upon this subject in April last. He must express his great regret that a depreciatory opinion should be expressed in this public manner of a lady medical officer whose high medical skill and attainments were no less obvious to those who knew her than her natural kindness to those members of the staff who became her patients.

The Old Age Pensions Bill occupied the Lords all day on Tuesday in the Committee stage and led to some very interesting debates. The Upper House was greatly limited in its action by the privilege of the House of Commons over money bills, and consequently could not amend the bill in any serious way. Lord Cromer, however, passed, by a majority of 32, an amendment fixing as a time limit December 31st, 1915, to the bill, but it is very probable that the Commons will not accept this alteration of their

measure. Several less important amendments were made dealing with the administrative methods of the bill, and then the report stage was arranged to be taken and the bill finished by Thursday, so that the Commons may deal with the amendments before the end of the week.

The Durham University Bill has had an easy time in the Lords, and has passed through Committee and been reported for third reading.

Old Age Pensioners and Medical Relief.—On Monday last Mr. Bennett asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the recipient of an old age pension would, in case of necessity, be entitled to receive medical relief from a board of guardians. Mr. Lloyd-George answered that medical or surgical assistance applied by or on the recommendation of a medical officer to the recipient of an old age pension would not disqualify him for continuing to receive his pension.

The Vital Statistics of India.—Mr. Rees asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether the statistics of births and deaths in India had become more accurate and reliable year by year; and, if the answer was in the affirmative, whether the India Office accepted comparisons between the death-rate of the present time and of past years as affording proof that the death-rate had risen. Mr. Buchanan replied that, according to the last Census report, the degree of error in the Indian returns of births and deaths had in some provinces at least been greatly reduced. Comparisons of the kind suggested by the honourable member should be made with all reserve.

The Sanitary Condition of the Lewis.—Mr. Weir asked the Secretary for Scotland last Monday, in view of the fact that it is now upwards of three years since Dr. Dittmar, the medical inspector for the Local Government Board for Scotland, reported the sanitary condition of the townships in the Island of Lewis as dangerous to the public health, if he would state whether he had yet obtained from the local authority information in regard to the houses contained in these townships; and if he had yet succeeded in making arrangements with the Treasury such as would admit of assistance being given towards the construction of houses on new sites. Mr. Sinclair replied that he learned on inquiry that steady progress was being made in the sanitary improvement of crofters' houses. This and other questions affecting administration in the Lewis were constantly before him, but no arrangements in the direction referred to by the honourable member had been made.

Vaccination Fees and Poor-law Salaries.—Mr. Fergus asked the President of the Local Government Board on Tuesday, if his attention had been directed to the recent action of the guardians of the Driffield Union in determining their vaccination contract with Dr. Brand, solely in consequence of his resignation of his office as district medical officer; and if he had sanctioned the utilizing of emoluments, arising from the office of public vaccinator, as an inducement to Poor-law medical officers to accept low salaries and allowances for supplies of medicines, surgical appliances, and dressings, visits, and consultations in their treatment of sick poor parish patients. Mr. Burns replied that his attention had been called to this matter. He had not expressed any approval of the principle referred to in the last part of the question. It was, however, competent for the guardians to determine the vaccination contract if they thought fit to do so without any sanction on his part.

Medical Officers of Health and the Factory Acts.—On Tuesday Mr. Ramsay Macdonald asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the apparent lack of uniformity in the reports of medical officers of health, he had considered the advisability of issuing a circular to local authorities informing them that they must include in the annual report of the medical officers of health to the Home Office all premises visited in connexion with infectious disease, provided home work was found to be carried on. Mr. Gladstone said that he had no authority to issue the instructions suggested, nor would they meet the case, as Sections 109 and 110 of the Factory Act did not apply to all kinds of home work. The Home Office had done what it could to secure uniformity in the reports of the medical officers of health by issuing forms of tables, but the use of the forms was not compulsory.