

Arrangements have been concluded with Hospital Boards for the provision, as from 5th May, 1941, of pharmaceutical supplies in respect of out-patients. Payments to contracting chemists and Hospital Boards are made in accordance with an official price schedule forming part of the Drug Tariff.

A feature of the scheme is the recognition of midwifery orders as the subject of payment from the Fund. "Midwifery order" is precisely defined in the Drug Tariff as to substance and maximum quantity, and may be issued by any contracting obstetric nurse or private-hospital licensee on behalf of any woman who has engaged her to afford maternity benefits.

X-ray Diagnostic Services: Benefits in respect of X-ray diagnostic services were commenced on 11th August, 1941. The nature of these benefits is described in clause 4 of the regulations (1941/122).

X-ray diagnostic services performed by or under the direct medical supervision of a medical practitioner officially recognized as a radiologist or by any medical practitioner employed by a Hospital Board, and which are afforded on the recommendation of a medical practitioner other than the radiologist, are the subject of payments from the Fund. Where, however, a recognized radiologist who engages in other types of medical practice takes an X-ray photograph which he has deemed to be necessary after personal examination of the patient, such service is the subject of benefits.

Payments from the Fund are made in accordance with the scale of fees contained in the Schedule to the regulations (1942/14). The fees prescribed by the Schedule are payable to a Hospital Board in full satisfaction of its charges, but recognized radiologists engaged in private practice are entitled to charge the patient an approved fee in addition to the fee payable from the Social Security Fund.

General Medical Services: The statutory provisions which bring certain general medical services within the scope of benefits are contained in the Social Security Amendment Act, 1941, and the regulations thereunder. This class of benefits was introduced on 1st November, 1941.

"General medical services" are defined in section 3 of the Amendment Act, whilst certain additional medical services are excluded by clause 5 (2) of the regulations, subject to the qualification that any of the services excluded by the regulations may, in special circumstances, and with the approval of the Minister of Health, be brought within the scope of general medical services.

Any medical practitioner who provides any general medical service is entitled to receive from the Fund the amount of 7s. 6d. for each consultation at his surgery or visit to the patient's residence during any week-day. For any such service urgently requested and duly afforded at any time on a Sunday or between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. on any other day a fee of 12s. 6d. is payable from the Fund.

The Medical Officer of Health may approve a claim for a higher fee than 7s. 6d. or 12s. 6d. if the relative medical service necessarily involved more than thirty minutes of the practitioner's time.

In addition to the fees for medical service, provision is made for the payment of mileage fees.

Fees may be claimed from the Fund either by the practitioner directly or by the patient by way of refund, in which latter case the claim must be supported by the doctor's receipted account.

Special provision has been made enabling the payment or refund of the cost of medicines or drugs supplied by the practitioner for the treatment of the patient before they could be conveniently obtained elsewhere—i.e., from a contracting chemist.

The scheme outlined under the heading "Medical Benefits" in my report for the year ended 31st March, 1941, is still operating. The two schemes run concurrently, and doctors who have lists of patients under the medical-benefits arrangements may, if they wish, afford general medical services. Any patient whose name is included on a doctor's list under the medical-benefits scheme is not entitled, during such time as his name appears on such list, to general medical services provided under the Amendment Act, except in cases of emergency when he cannot obtain the services of the doctor on whose list his name appears.

To facilitate the provision of general medical services, certain obligations are, by regulation, imposed on patients. Default in any of these obligations renders the patient liable to monetary penalty.

GENERAL.

Milk-in-schools Scheme.—The total number of pupils included in the Milk-in-schools Scheme is now 233,744, an increase of 4,781 over the previous year. A further sixty-three schools have also been brought within the scheme. In other words, pasteurized bottled milk, milk for cocoa-making purposes, or malted milk is now available to some 83 per cent. of the school population of the Dominion.

The totals are made up as follows:—

	Pupils.
Pasteurized bottled milk	221,306
Milk for cocoa-making	4,787
Malted milk	7,651
Total	233,744

Apples-in-schools Scheme.—Apples free of cost are being supplied during the present apple season to pupils attending all types of schools. The supply will probably continue for a twelve-weeks period and will involve the distribution of some 152,000 cases of apples over the period.

Health Camps. As forecast in last year's report, a considerable extension has been made in the chain of health camps for the treatment of under-standard children. The permanent camps at Otaki and Roxburgh, also the secondary camps at Gisborne and Nelson, have been completed, furnished, and equipped, while plans and specifications are ready for the establishment of permanent camps at Auckland and Christchurch.

The proceeds from the sale of health stamps and donations amount to a record total of £7,084, which, together with special donations from the J. R. McKenzie Trust and the Junior Red Cross and the subsidy from art-union funds, will be available for the maintenance of children. It is gratifying to note that where a medical officer has so recommended, executives have sent children to health camps in other districts on account of the more suitable climatic condition.