

A certain number of recently qualified medical men have become available for service in military medical institutions, thus releasing more highly paid Medical Officers. These medical men carry out the duties corresponding to those of house physician and house surgeon in civil hospitals. The supply of these has been very limited, as they are in constant demand for civil hospitals; but as more become available a further economy will be effected by their employment.

The diets of patients and the supply of fuel and lighting are carefully investigated with a view to avoid wastage, and all cases of loss or breakage of equipment are inquired into.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

The work of the Vocational Training Branch has become firmly established in all military hospitals. The following table shows the percentage of patients receiving instruction at the 31st March, 1921, as compared with the previous period, and the number of hours attended by each patient:—

	31st March, 1921.	1st April, 1920.
Percentage of patients receiving instruction ..	85·70	80·0
Average number of hours attended by each patient ..	45·25	21·0

Curative classes are prescribed by the Medical Officers for men requiring the same, and attendance is compulsory. The work includes: (a) Specific exercises for treatment of orthopædic cases, such as treadle-work, carpentry, basket-making, &c.; (b) curative occupation, which assists cure generally by providing interesting employment for body and mind. Bed patients do embroidery and other light forms of occupational work.

Vocational Classes.—Patients are given free choice of vocational classes, unless there are medical reasons to the contrary.

- (a.) New trades are taught to men who had no trade on enlistment or who are unable to resume their pre-war occupations. A report on vocational training received by each man is sent to the Repatriation Department, which continues the training after discharge from hospital.
- (b.) Patients returning to their pre-war occupations attend workshops for “brushing-up,” and take courses to qualify them for examinations.
- (c.) Patients not requiring further trade training learn trades likely to be of assistance; farmers, for instance, show great interest in motor mechanics, saddlery, carpentry, and boot-repairing. Book-keeping and general education are taken by men of various callings. Free courses at University, technical colleges, and correspondence schools are arranged for men requiring them.

The subjects taught since the inception of the branch number 112. The principal classes at present are leather-work, carpentry, motor engineering, commercial courses, basket-work, embroidery, general engineering, poultry-farming, boot-repairing, and bee-keeping.

Disposal of Produce.—Articles made are sold either to the public at ordinary rates or to the makers of the articles at reduced rates. Since May, 1920, the cost of material has been refunded to the Department, the amount so recovered being £1,501 13s. 4d. Patients show great keenness in making articles for their own use, providing themselves with furniture, saddlery, boots, beehives, basketry, travelling-trunks, &c. The price charged for these articles is cost of material plus a contribution of one-third of this to the Recreation Fund.

Reduction of Staff.—The centralization of patients into main hospitals has enabled very considerable economy of staff to be effected. During the year the number of instructors has fallen from fifty to thirty, and administrative and clerical staff from thirty-one to fourteen. Assistant vocation officers were dispensed with, and recently the branch was reorganized into two districts only, resulting in the further reduction of two vocation officers and their clerical staffs. During the year the total salaries have been reduced by 38 per cent.

Maintenance work for military hospitals, comprising carpentry, boot-repairing, tailoring, engineering, and electrical work, was performed by vocational classes during the year to the value of £1,518.

Splint-making.—Workshops for the making of splints and surgical boots, and other appliances, are in operation at Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Trentham, and Rotorua. These workshops are no longer used for the training of patients: they are conducted simply as factories, all the work being done by paid workmen. So far as military requirements permit, work is undertaken for civilians. Surgical appliances to the value of £1,487 2s. 8d. were supplied to civilians during the year.