

Your Commission is of opinion that by standardization of articles, and grouping of orders, large savings in purchasing could be effected. The annual amount of such purchases would be approximately £350,000, for general hospitals and £150,000 for mental hospitals. If the purchasing-orders of all the hospitals were combined, this large volume of business should secure the lowest possible purchasing-prices. It should further enable overseas purchases to be made direct from the manufacturers or direct from the world's principal markets.

Your Commission recommends the setting-up of a Hospital Supplies Purchase Board, to include officials from the four base hospitals, who already have had good experience of buying, and two business men with the required knowledge; and it is believed that such a Board, with representatives of the Health and Mental Hospitals Departments, would be the means of effecting considerable saving.

Evidence was given to the effect that the plan of purchasing through the High Commissioner's Office has not always proved satisfactory, and your Commission is of opinion that the Hospital Supplies Purchase Board should be at liberty to make other arrangements should these be found more advantageous.

CHECKING ACCOUNTS AND SUPPLIES: INSPECTING HOUSE STEWARD.

Your Commission approved of the newly created position of an Inspecting House Steward, and recommends that such an officer be permanently attached to the Health Department. His duties should include—

The introduction and continuance of an efficient system of recording and checking the receipt and issue of supplies;

Advice to all Hospital Boards regarding purchase of supplies;

An oversight of the buying methods, quantity consumption, and costs.

It is considered that the adoption of such a system at each hospital would result in great economy.

INSPECTING ACCOUNTANTS.

(c.) Your Commission is of opinion that it is essential, in the interests of economy, that two Inspecting Accountants be appointed without delay—

To introduce a uniform system of accounts and returns;

To check the accounts, stores, and equipment of each hospital at least once a year;

To introduce an effective system for the collection of fees by each Board;

To introduce a uniform system of costing at each hospital, and report to the Department on the cost of maintenance.

It appeared in evidence that the book-keeping methods at the various hospitals are not at present uniform, and that consequently it is impossible for the Department to compile accurate statistics; that in some cases the official audit of accounts has been as much as two years in arrears; that in many cases there is no stock-taking of stores and equipment; that there is a general lack of method in the collection of fees, resulting in a substantial loss of income; that the absence of a uniform system of costing tends to extravagance in the issue of supplies.

APPOINTMENT OF ARCHITECT.

(d.) Difficulty has arisen between Hospital Boards and the Health Department in regard to plans for hospital buildings or extensions. The procedure to-day is for Boards to employ architects, whose plans are submitted to the Department for approval. Your Commission considers that the Department, without the services of an architect, is not properly qualified to deal with such plans, and is of opinion that great economy would be effected by the appointment of an architect with special experience in hospital-construction.

The duties of the architect should be, *inter alia*, to keep himself abreast of developments in hospital architecture; to prepare plans and specifications, as far as possible, for all hospital buildings and extensions; and to arrange for ground plans providing for ultimate extensions of all hospital buildings.

As the services of the architect would be at the disposal of the Boards, those services should be a charge on the Boards obtaining them.