

“(7) *Statistical* :—

“(i) Attendances and Operations: Attendances recorded and operations performed in the Wellington Dental Clinic for the years 1937-38 to 1939-40 are shown below:

	Attendances.	Fillings.	Extractions.	Other Operations.
“ 1937-38 ..	47,238	31,014	3,141	31,931
“ 1938-39 ..	52,997	42,419	3,894	33,894
“ 1939-40 ..	62,544	37,264	2,850	41,100
“ Increase since last year	9,547	(Decrease) 5,155	(Decrease) 1,044	7,206
“ Total increase since 1936-37	33,956	21,516	1,406	23,531

“Total attendances recorded and operations performed to 31st March, 1940:—

Attendances.	Fillings.	Extractions.	Other Operations.
615,437	412,747	79,258	355,754

“(ii) The number of patients under treatment at 31st March, 1940, 7082.

“The number of admissions for the year is as follows:—

“ New patients commenced	915
“ Transferred from other centres	107
“ Total	1,022

“The total loss of patients during the year—

“ Patients reaching the maximum age for treatment	165
“ Patients transferred to other centres	112
“ Patients whose treatment has elapsed through failure to attend	365
“ Total	642

“The net increase of patients under treatment is therefore 380, compared with 1,723 for the previous year.

“(iii) *Waiting List*: The number of names on the waiting list as at 31st March for the last three years is as follows: 1937, 3,398; 1938, 1,095; 1939, 229; 1940, 1,092.

“During this year 915 new patients commenced treatment, thus completely eliminating the names standing at 31st March, 1939. Of the 1,092 now waiting, none have been listed for more than six months, but the number of applications is steadily increasing.

“During the past twelve months the smooth running of the training programme has been made more difficult in that certain members have been required to give much time to matters in connection with the new clinic, thus throwing extra stress on those required to take extra duties. All members of the staff have responded well.

“In conclusion, I would also like to express my thanks to all members of the staff, who by their loyal co-operation have maintained the efficiency of the training-school and dental clinic; to the Principal and officers of the Teachers' Training College, and to the Director and officers of other Divisions of the Department who have assisted in various ways in the course of training, and finally to those members of the dental profession who continue to co-operate and assist with the work of the Wellington Dental Clinic.”

DENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION.

Mention was made in the last annual report of this Division of the time and instruction devoted during the period of training to the study of dental health education and dietetic principles, and the instruction given in methods of disseminating the principles advocated by the Department. In this connection a notable forward step has been made by the Department in devising a uniform teaching for all officers, of whatever branch of the Department, who undertake health teaching. This should do much to clear up misunderstandings and ensure that a common front is presented to the public on the important subject of diet and nutrition. With the steady increase in the staff of the Dental Division it should be possible in the near future for more intensive educational efforts to be made on the part of all dental nurses, and increasing attention will be devoted to this essential aspect of the work of the School Dental Service.

During the year under review the educational activities carried out numbered 2,461, exclusive of chair-side instruction, which is carried out as a routine procedure in conjunction with dental treatment. This figure represents an increase of over one thousand on the previous year's figure. There is still great need of a wider appreciation among parents and children, and, indeed, among the whole population, of the value of sound and healthy teeth in childhood, adolescence, and adult life. Sir George Newman, formerly Chief Medical Officer of the British Ministry of Health, has quoted a report from one of the “approved societies” under the national health insurance scheme, in which it is declared that “neglect of teeth trouble is the cause of quite half of the ill health found among the industrial classes.”

The results of dental health teaching are encouraging as far as the children are concerned. Unfortunately, it is the parents who are lagging behind, and it is they who, in the end, have it in their power to control the situation.