

has not been permitted to spread. The occurrence of two cases of small-pox upon a ship within our own waters points to the necessity of a more stringent enforcement of the law with regard to vaccination, as well as the expenditure of a considerable sum upon our sanitary defences.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE AID.

The colony last year granted by way of subsidies £100,274 to the hospitals and charitable institutions, and yet had no say whatever in respect to the expenditure. It is true we have an Inspector-General, but his power of control is nil. The position is almost farcical. Members review and criticize the expenditure of those Departments directly controlled by the State, but in this, which to all intents and purposes is a Department of State, neither the House nor the Government has any voice in the administration and cost, although providing by far the largest share of the money.

The local bodies, who find, next to the Government, the largest share of the money, have a little say in the management, seeing they nominate members to the Charitable Aid Boards and Hospital Trustees.

A change is necessary, and the moneys required should be annually voted. The Government should have a responsibility—the Inspector-General and other Inspectors should, where they see administration defective, patients not medically or otherwise properly treated, where persons are refused admission or improperly admitted and retained, or where waste or extravagance obtain, and where in case of charitable aid the expenditure is excessive, have power to call upon the Board or Hospital Trustees to effect reforms and improvements; and, should this not be done, the Government should be empowered to stop further payments to the Boards and Hospital Trustees until effect be given to the recommendations of the Inspectors.

The law in this respect, and in respect to the constitutions of the Boards and Trustees, requires amendment, and either the representation of the Government and the local bodies should be on the basis of the moneys contributed, or the controlling bodies should be wholly elected by the persons in the district who are on the electoral roll.

HOSPITALS FOR THE MENTALLY AFFLICTED.

The question of increasing the accommodation for those whose mental condition warrants their detention was brought before the House some time ago. My worthy colleague, the Minister in charge of hospitals, having on that occasion, with myself, fully stated the intentions of the Government in respect to this important matter, there is nothing further to add beyond stating that ample provision will be made to fully meet the pressing requirements of the case.

The erection of one or more hospitals for first treatment on the lines of the Bethlehem Hospital deserves our earnest attention.

As soon as the necessary accommodation is provided, classification of the inmates is another essential. The commitment to our hospitals of persons should be jealously guarded. Information has reached me to the effect that patients are sent to the hospitals for the insane who should, for a time at least, be sent to the ordinary hospitals.

There are also, it is alleged, hundreds of persons in our hospitals for mental diseases suffering only from senile decay.

During the last five years no less than £86,000 was spent in erecting buildings and furnishing the same. Last year the salaries and allowances, and cost of maintenance, &c., amounted to £74,799. This year you will be asked to provide £75,895 out of the Consolidated Fund for the same purpose, and in addition a large sum for buildings, &c., out of the Public Works Fund.

FARMS FOR SOCIAL OUTCASTS.

Year by year, members are fully aware, large sums of money are spent in the maintenance of persons in our gaols who are really not criminals in the full acceptance of the term; they are simply derelicts of society. Drink, evil companions, old age, physical incapability, lack of mental strength to resist temptation to do wrong, all conduce to a breaking of the law. They must live, and when not in gaol they prey upon society.