

The number of new patients who have attended the clinic for initial examination during the twelve months 1st April, 1932, to 31st March, 1933, is 1,660, a slight increase over the figure for 1931-32 (1,626), while the average number per year since treatment was first given is 1,857.

The following table shows the average age of patients attending the Dental Clinic, Wellington, for initial examination over the twelve years that the clinic has been in existence :—

	Years.		Years.		Years.
1921-22	.. 8·6	1925-26	.. 8·0	1929-30	.. 6·9
1922-23	.. 8·2	1926-27	.. 8·1	1930-31*	.. 5·6
1923-24	.. 7·1	1927-28	.. 7·8	1931-32*	.. 4·9
1924-25	.. 7·6	1928-29	.. 7·3	1932-33*	.. 4·9

The percentage of children attending the clinic for the first time in various age groups is shown below :—

Year.	Under Five Years.		Over Five Years and under Eight Years.		Over Eight Years.	
		Per Cent.		Per Cent.		Per Cent.
1921-22	5·2		31·0		63·8
1922-23	8·0		36·0		56·0
1923-24	19·5		47·3		43·2
1924-25	17·8		41·1		41·1
1925-26	15·2		37·3		48·5
1926-27	17·6		34·9		47·5
1927-28	20·8		35·3		43·0
1928-29	27·1		36·1		36·8
1929-30	28·1		50·1		21·8
1930-31	39·7		49·0		11·3
1931-32	54·4		39·7		5·9
1932-33	54·4		40·3		5·3

At the 31st March, 1932, the number of patients under treatment was 7,295, and at the 31st March, 1933, 6,781.

During the year treatment was suspended for 727 patients on account of non-attendance, compared with 838 during 1931-32, 940 during 1930-31, and 2,195 during 1929-30.

Annual Registration Fee.—Registrations at the Wellington Clinic during the twelve months ending 31st March, 1933, totalled 4,155, compared with 3,765 for the first nine months of this charge ending 31st March, 1932; and exemptions granted were 684, or 16·5 per cent. of the total of those paying the registration fee, compared with 274, or 7·3 per cent. for the previous nine months. This large increase is almost entirely due to the growth in unemployment and the more general acceptance of relief among those who bring their children to the clinic for treatment. To date 71·4 per cent. of those eligible for continuation of treatment at 31st March, 1933, have renewed their registration or have been exempted, compared with 56·6 per cent. at 31st March, 1932.

The introduction of the annual registration fee has considerably reduced the number of new patients applying for treatment. At 31st March, 1931, the number of applicants awaiting treatment stood at 1,040; at 31st March, 1932, 184; while during November and December, 1932, an actual shortage of patients for clinical work occurred. Applications now stand at 359, but this only because a gradual reduction in the number of senior nurses operating, from thirty-six in 1932 to twenty-five at 31st March, 1933, and to a possible maximum of nineteen in the near future, has made the initial treatment of new patients inadvisable since the beginning of 1933. The indications are that very few new patients can be admitted for treatment during the next twelve months, as already considerable difficulty is being experienced in maintaining treatment for the patients who are at present attending the clinic.

The reduction in the number of operators at the Wellington Clinic and the absence of a junior year has naturally caused a measure of disorganization in the running of the institution, but although this has retarded the progress of the nurses in training, the work of the clinic as a whole has been well maintained. It has, however, been most pleasing to find that at all times the staff and nurses have been ready to meet the many extra demands that have been made on their time and energy.

SECTION V.—GENERAL.

Certain features of the work of the Division as disclosed in this report call for special comment.

Ratio of Teeth extracted to Teeth saved.—From time to time a certain amount of criticism has been levelled at the School Dental Service on account of the comparatively large number of teeth extracted, particularly deciduous or "first" teeth. It is fully recognized that the too-early extraction of these teeth may and does lead to irregularities in the permanent dentition. However, the Service has always been called on to deal with large numbers of children who have had no previous dental attention, and, in making these children dentally fit, there has been no alternative but to extract

* These are the ages on admission. Application for admission was made six to twelve months earlier.