

The Editor's Letter Box.

WHAT THE DESTRUCTION OF THE VOLUNTARY HOSPITALS MAY COST THE STATE.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—In your last issue Sir Henry Burdett is reported as saying: "Hospitals in this country require from £10,000,000 to £15,000,000 annually." Can you kindly tell me how this figure is arrived at, as I am in need of information as to the approximate annual cost for some work I am engaged on at present? From the "Annual" I make the annual expenditure for the British Isles much less than Sir Henry.—Yours faithfully,

October 10.

GODFREY H. HAMILTON.

National Hospital
for the Paralysed and Epileptic.

[Mr. Hamilton will find the information he seeks on page 71 of the present issue.—Ed., THE HOSPITAL.]

THE INSURANCE BILL AND VOLUNTARY HOSPITALS.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—May I first of all express my sincere appreciation of your kindly references to me in the current and preceding numbers of THE HOSPITAL; but my purpose in writing to you is to ask for certain information which, I believe, I can obtain from no other source. I am anxious to know, partly for my Committee's information (though I confess I have another object in view as well), the following, namely:—

1. The present cost of hospitals in London, the provinces, Scotland, and Ireland. It was stated at Manchester that "hospitals require in this country from ten to fifteen millions a year"; but I venture to suggest that there is a very large gap between ten and fifteen millions, which you probably can easily lessen.

I notice also on page 11 of your exceedingly interesting and instructive article on "Co-operation and Intercommunication" in THE HOSPITAL that you give the percentages of hospitals' income which is more or less secured. What is the approximate figure of income which is not secured? I cannot follow you in your suggestion of the way to arrive at it (page 11 top); and this is the figure, of course, which will be affected by operation of the Insurance Bill.

2. What would be the effect on the hospitals' income if they were granted state aid? What amount (if any), in your opinion, would hospitals lose if they were in receipt of state aid?

3. What amount would probably be required from the State in payment for treatment of persons at present treated at the hospitals, who will be "insured persons"? It seems to me that the answer to this question can only be the expression of a personal opinion, because the estimates of the number of insured persons who, after the enactment of the Insurance Bill, will be treated in the hospitals is so uncertain.

I feel very sorry indeed if I am asking you for figures which it will be difficult to obtain, but I was advised to apply to you and I should be very grateful if you could tell me have an answer to this letter.—Yours faithfully,

Kingsland Road, N.E.

J. COURTNEY BUCHANAN,

October 9.

Secretary and House Governor.
Metropolitan Hospital.

[We have dealt with the questions raised by Mr. Buchanan in the article on National Insurance, Voluntary and State Hospitals, on p. 71.—Ed., THE HOSPITAL.]

THE CAPITAL COST OF LONDON AND PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—I wonder whether you could tell me what is a fair average cost on capital account per bed in London and provincial hospitals? That is to say, what do the buildings work out at per bed? I, of course, know what is the cost per annum for upkeep, but I want to get the cost per head on capital account.

For any information you can give me I shall be much obliged.—Yours faithfully,

October 10.

CLAUDE WRIGHT, General Secretary

Dr. Barnardo's Homes.

[Presuming Mr. Wright means the cost per bed as represented by the actual expenditure in the whole of a modern hospital, we could mention instances where the total expenditure represents a cost of something like £1,000 per bed. In our judgment, the present cost of hospital buildings is infinitely greater than it ought to be and need be. In our view the average cost should seldom if ever exceed a sum of from £200 to £300 per bed.—Ed. THE HOSPITAL.]

HOSPITALS AND STREET NOISES.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—I was much interested in your remarks on the attempt being made in Sheffield to reduce the noise from traffic in the streets adjacent to the Royal Hospital, and I would like to draw your attention to the fact that all Northern cities are not so much behind London and the Southern county towns in this respect as you seem to indicate. In Bradford the Royal Infirmary has a main road with tram-lines on the west side, and on the east there is another fairly busy roadway. In order to relieve the patients in the wards from street noises the City Council many years ago laid wood paving on both the roads mentioned alongside the infirmary grounds and buildings, and this has done a good deal towards reducing the noise of street traffic.—I am, yours truly,

J. J. BARRON, Secretary-Superintendent

October 14.

Royal Infirmary, Bradford.

THE SCANDAL OF OUT-PATIENTS.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—Allow me to point out and correct the error which I made in my letter published in your last week's issue with regard to the air space. This should have been from 100 to 500 cubic feet per patient, and not 1,000 to 1,500 as stated, the latter being for hospital wards.—Yours faithfully,

JAMES ASHENDEN.

22 Albemarle Gardens,

New Malden, October 13.

AN APPRECIATION.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the improved HOSPITAL? I believe it will now prove of even greater service to our institutions generally, as it should reach a larger circle of readers interested in hospital and institutional life.—Faithfully yours,

LEONARD D. REA.

King Edward VII.'s Hospital,

Cardiff, October 16.