

culties of the situation, and as to the best method of distributing the amount available for medical attendance? The first one was the one indicated clearly in the Act, that they should invite every doctor in the country to place his name on a panel, and that they should give every employed person free choice amongst the men who appeared on that register. The second method, in the event of the panel failing, was that they should hand over the money for medical attendance to be dispensed by the approved societies. The third method was a method which was very fully discussed at the last meeting of the advisory committee, and found very great favor amongst the members—that they should use the money for the purpose of organizing a national medical service.

I should like (continued Mr. Lloyd George) to say a word at this stage upon those three alternatives. As to handing the money over to approved societies, I think, on the whole, although there may be friends of mine who dissent from what I am saying, the general feeling of the advisory committee was against that. On the other hand, the majority were in favor of starting a national medical service in the event of the panel system failing. Others went beyond that, being in favor of starting, from the outset, on the principle of establishing a medical service. There is no doubt that during the long time the medical question has been before the public opinion has grown in favor of organizing a wholtime national medical service, and the feeling found remarkable expression, as I have already said, at the last meeting of the advisory committee. Well, I must admit that to any social reformer such a project is very alluring. It would be possible, if the amount of the additional grant which the Government proposed to make were added to the money already available under the Act, to organize a service which would have many advantages. But we are here to administer an Act of Parliament, and it is an Act of Parliament which was passed a year ago.

At the time the bill was under discussion in Parliament the demand had not arisen for a national service, and, therefore, Parliament, with absolute unanimity, decided in favor of the panel system. We

are here to administer that Act, and the first thing we have to do, unless that Act is amended, is to set about establishing the panel system. If the panel system were for any reason to fail, then no amendment of the Act of Parliament would be necessary in order to establish a national service. The provisions of the National Insurance Act are adequate in that case to enable us to proceed with the establishment of a national service.

Proceeding, the Chancellor of the Exchequer indicated the actual proposals of the Government. They had, he said, decided that out of 1s 3d per head provided for sanatoria, 6d should be allocated for paying the general practitioner for all tuberculosis work. The doctors ought to be paid for extra work, but it was almost impossible to check a bill for extras. They could not give a blank cheque for extras to any profession. The Government proposed to assure 7s as a basis of the amount which was to be paid to the doctor. That would be inclusive of extras and tuberculosis. Then there would be 1s 6d—a reasonable allowance—for drugs, which brought the amount up to 8s 6d. They were going to reserve another 6d between the doctor and chemist; that meant 9s in all for the non-institutional treatment of all diseases amongst the insured population. This 6d would provide £320,000 which would be available for drugs if the bill exceeded 1s 6d, and where it did not exceed that amount it would be available for the doctor. The doctor would say, supposing there is an epidemic in a given district and there is an abnormal demand for drugs, "It is rather hard on me that the 6d should be drawn upon just when I am worked harder." He (Mr. Lloyd George) thought his case was a good one. The Government therefore proposed to provide a central fund to deal with abnormal cases of that kind. When they were satisfied that there had been an epidemic which had made an abnormal demand for drugs in a given district they would make a grant from the central fund in respect of the abnormal amount of drugs needed. This was outside the 9s.

Finally the Chancellor said: If the remuneration is increased the service must be improved. Up to the present the doctor has not been adequately paid, and,