

everywhere else. Of hospital charges met by the societies one-fourth is refunded by the government up to an amount not exceeding 75 aurar for each member.

Sickness insurance in Iceland is voluntary, and each society fixes for itself the annual premium payable by its members, which must, however, be so large as together with the State grant to be considered sufficient by the government to meet the expenses against which the members are insured.

So far only eight sickness benefit societies have been formed (all in towns and villages) with a total membership numbering 3700.

SANITATION

The Head of the Medical Profession, the *landlæknir* (surgeon-general), has the general care of all matters of public health.

The country is divided into 48 medical districts with as many government-paid doctors; but there is besides them a number of medical practitioners and specialists, especially in Reykjavík. The public medical officers, besides practising as ordinary physicians, which is their chief occupation, are also required to safeguard general hygiene; take steps for the prevention of epidemic diseases; and keep the *landlæknir* informed concerning the sanitary conditions. In almost every parish there is a trained midwife who, as a rule, is also entrusted with the work of vaccination.

Though the development of hospital service in Iceland has been very slow, several districts (and municipalities) have now small general hospitals, partly maintained by the State; but so far a private institution in Reykjavík, owned by the Sisters of St. Joseph, has had to do duty for a State-owned hospital; this want will, however, soon be redressed, for the erection of a public hospital, equipped for general complaints, will be completed this year (1930).

Of hospitals for special diseases there are the following, all in the neighbourhood of Reykjavík:

A *hospital for lepers* (60 beds), built in 1898, and donated to Iceland by the Danish I.O.O.F. Leprosy was formerly a very common disease in Iceland, and in 1896 there were 236 patients, while at present there are but 30—40; an *Asylum* for mentally unsound persons, a State institution, built in 1907 and greatly extended in 1929 (130 beds); a *sanatorium* for tuberculous patients (150 beds), erected by a private society in 1910 and taken over by the State in 1916. A law of 1921 concerning tuberculosis provides free nursing for tuberculous