years inclusive, 1914 to 1919, of four large boroughs—one in Scotland, one in the north of England, and two in the south of England; the averages of the first three years and of the second three years are given. In all four boroughs there was an increase in the number of illegitimate births. In the first and second boroughs the increase in cases of notified ophthalmia neonatorum was very marked, while in the third and fourth boroughs, although there was an actual increase in the number of cases, the proportion of cases to the number of illegitimate births was not raised in comparison with the first three years.

S. S.

COUNCIL OF BRITISH OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

A Report on some Public Authorities who are in the habit of referring Ophthalmic Cases to Hospitals for Examination, Treatment, and (or) Report.—Continued from page 468.

Police Force of Great Britain

The Police Forces of Great Britain, though to some extent regulated by the Home Office, are, in fact, controlled by the local authorities of the several districts and have no uniform standard of medical service.

With reference to ophthalmic treatment the Council found examples of the following different methods of procedure:

1. In addition to a police surgeon there is a salaried ophthalmic surgeon to whom eye cases can be referred. This is the method in Leeds.

2. The police surgeon can, if necessary, refer any particular case for a special opinion to an ophthalmic surgeon, but there is no official ophthalmic surgeon. This is the method adopted in the following places:—City of London, Manchester, Wolverhampton, Oxford, Nottingham, and Exeter. In some instances the authority of the Watch Committee has to be obtained before a case can be referred to an ophthalmic surgeon.

3. The police contributes to a hospital directly as in the case of Edinburgh (1d. a week to the Royal Infirmary); or the Watch Committee, as in the case of Birmingham, gives an annual subscription to the hospital at which the cases are treated.

4. Cases are sent to hospitals, but no contributions are made towards the hospital funds. Such conditions obtain at Bristol and in some parts of the metropolitan area.
5. In some instances a combination of schemes 2, 3, and 4 obtain. Thus the Metropolitan Police, though providing for medical attendance, usually send their eye cases to hospitals, but in rare instances to an ophthalmic surgeon and pay a fee for his services.

6. There is a police surgeon but no special provision for ophthalmic examination. This is the case in Essex.

The Council has found it impracticable to investigate the conditions obtaining in all the police forces of the United Kingdom, but the above may be taken as characteristic examples.

The Council is of opinion that the medical service of the police force cannot be adequate unless it includes the services of ophthalmic surgeons to whom officers and recruits can be referred for expert opinion and report.

In further pursuance of the matters dealt with in the first part of this report, the following communication has been sent to the Postmaster-General.

To the Postmaster General.

Sir,

The Council of British Ophthalmologists have had their attention drawn to the large number of Post Office employés sent by your medical officers to the hospital for ophthalmic advice, treatment or report.

For example, the numbers of your employés who attended at the three following hospitals during the year 1920, are: Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, 180 (approximate); Royal Westminster Ophthalmic Hospital, 136; Central London Ophthalmic Hospital, 282.

The Council understand that the Post Office undertakes to provide medical treatment for its employés under certain wage limit with the object of ensuring their efficiency for the performance of their duties.

The Council note that no ophthalmic surgeons are appointed to whom the Post Office Medical Officer can refer eye cases. They further consider that the efficiency of the service cannot be maintained without such assistance.

The Council feel that medical reports on which presumably official action may be taken, should, in justice to all concerned, be given only by those officially appointed by the Post Office authorities for that purpose.

After due consideration, the Council desired me to forward you the following resolution that "The Postal Medical service cannot be adequate unless it includes the services of ophthalmic surgeons to whom recruits and employés could be referred for expert opinion and report."