special post-graduate courses. At the St. John's Hospital for the Skin there are clinical demonstrations in the afternoons, and a special course of lectures is given by the members of the honorary staff during the winter months, followed by demonstrations and clinical instruction on special cases; a special course of practical instruction on the bacteriology, mycology, and histo-pathology of the skin is given in the laboratories of the hospital.

At the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, special courses are conducted for from one to three months or longer, from October to July inclusive, for the purpose of keeping up to date the knowledge of children's diseases by practitioners both in general practice and in special studies. At Paddington Green Children's Hospital there is a course of post-graduate instruction in connexion with the Fellowship of Medicine.

At the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, Queen Square, post-graduate courses are held three times in the year—from January to March, April to June, and October to December—the duration of each course being about ten weeks; instruction is given in the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the nervous system, in addition to clinical instruction of a comprehensive character. At the Hospital for Epilepsy and Paralysis, Maida Vale, no attempt has yet been made to give definite courses, but the amount of material at the hospital is stated to be sufficient to illustrate any particular branch of nervous work that post-graduate students may be interested in; at the present time the hospital co-operates with the Fellowship of Medicine and gives a "refresher" course of one week's duration. At the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital the organization of special post-graduate teaching has long been in contemplation, but hitherto no systematic courses have been given, except that the hospital is taking part in the courses organized at various special hospitals by the Fellowship of Medicine.

In South-West London there has been a development of considerable importance, for there post-graduate instruction is being carried on in a well-equipped municipal (formerly Poor Law) hospital in a suburban district, linked up with a neighbouring general hospital. A committee has been formed of representatives of the staff of the Bolingbroke Hospital, the Wandsworth Division of the British Medical Association, and the South-West London Medical Society. Under the auspices of this committee a post-graduate association has been formed, affiliated with the Fellowship of Medicine, and courses of instruction are being conducted in connexion with the Bolingbroke Hospital and the St. James's Municipal Hospital. The intention of this Association is to give the local general practitioners the opportunity of obtaining post-graduate instruction with the minimum loss of time, as all the work is carried out in the midst of the district. We are informed that classes on any special subject can be arranged, with a minimum of six members. Similar courses of instruction might be started with advantage by the consultant staffs of municipal hospitals in other suburban areas.

This summary of the post-graduate instruction provided in London at the present time is perhaps somewhat incomplete and inadequate, for not all the hospitals to which inquiries were sent have replied. But it contains information enough to show that there is a considerable supply of facilities in post-graduate instruction already in existence, and as it would seem that the establishment of a central post-graduate school and hospital must for a considerable time remain an unattainable ideal, fuller use might well be made of them.

THE late Mr. John Christopher Geiselbrecht has made munificent bequests to hospitals, including the following: £6,000 to the Star and Garter Hospital, Richmond; £4,000 to the Miller General Hospital, Greenwich; £2,000 to the Metropolitan Hospital, Kingsland Road; £1,000 each to the Samaritan Hospital for Women, City of London Dispensary, and the Queen's Hospital for Children, Hackney Road; £800 to the Paddington Hospital for Sick Children; £600 to the Eltham and Mottingham Cottage Hospital; £500 each to the Central London Throat, Nose, and Ear Hospital, Royal Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, City Road, Hospital for Women, Soho, French Hospital, Soho, Dreadnought Hospital for Seamen, and the British Hospital for Mothers of Babies; £400 each to the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, Evelina Hospital for Sick Children, Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, and the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street; and £200 to St. Peter's Hospital for Stone. He has also bequeathed 500 shares in the Alliance Assurance Company to the King Edward's Hospital Fund.

MOTOR NOTES FOR MEDICAL MEN.

By H. MASSAC BUIST.

PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE LAW.

THE Departmental Committee on the Taxation and Regulation of Road Vehicles has been asked to take evidence on the taxation question raised in connexion with licences to use motor vehicles. In a few days the Budget is due to be introduced. Some motor owners, therefore, imagine that there will be an entire recasting of the scheme of motor taxation forthwith, because many of their organizations are seeking for a reversion to the fuel tax. It would, however, be impossible to recast all the arrangements within so short a space of time, even if it were possible, which it is not, to revert to a tax on fuel. The fact is that part of the Government programme is entirely a matter of placation. The issue will be the same as when the present law was going through the House of Commons. By reason of the numerous grounds on which a retention of the tax on fuel became impracticable, the Government of the day, not wishing to force on motor owners a method of taxation to which, it was represented, they were opposed in the gross, invited an alternative proposition to the present style of tax in face of the impracticability of that on fuel. No motoring organization has ever accepted that invitation, simply because the alternative was a tax on tyres, and no motoring body dare suggest that this would be preferable to one on horse-power. If a man has bad luck in buying a tyre it would only aggravate his grievance if he had to pay an extra tax as well as the money with which to buy a substitute tyre. There may be modifications in the particular methods of levying the tax according to horse-power. For instance, there will be concessions in the Budget in regard to trade car licences. But there will not be any reversion to the fuel tax unless a miracle has happened since last the matter was gone into very thoroughly by the various Government departments concerned. The fact that, now that some of the motoring bodies, in an endeavour to get back to the fuel tax, are willing to concede that no rebates should be allowed makes no difference. Their chief cry, of course, is the Automobile Association's slogan concerning the current system, to the effect that it is "a tax on ownership, not on use."

The Tax on the Right to Use.

If we consider the matter historically, however, the slogan proves to be utterly worthless because, before this scheme of taxation came into operation two financial years ago, we had in force a system of taxation which takes us back to the earliest phase at which the motor movement really became a practical proposition—namely, eighteen years, when in January, 1904, there came into operation the Motor Car Act of 1903. This is still the law governing the movement in general, and as applied to taxation from 1904 onwards it was based on every owner paying a horse-power Treasury rating tax on his vehicle. Therefore there is nothing new in the principle of "a tax on ownership, not on use." Secondly, that slogan is a false expression of the fact, because the tax is not on ownership at all. A man can have any motor vehicle he likes stored in his motor-house and pay no tax on it. On the contrary, the tax is one levied on the right to use a car, and not on the ownership of it. In that sense a fuel tax is also a tax on the means to use a car, which is surely the same thing in practice as a tax on the right to use one. Besides, if we are to tax motoring at all, it must be on the right to use the given vehicle. If it were not so, we should have to run all round the country and tax everybody, because they might take a ride on a motor bus by paying a penny bus fare. This particular agitation has been purposely worked up. A large majority of members of the Automobile Association and Motor Union, which is the largest motoring body in the world, with a membership of over 150,000, has taken no notice of its referendum in spite of the great publicity given to the matter. Three weeks after it was out the Association was glad to announce that 35,000 returns had been made, which is not one in four. Even so, as was announced in these columns, it has been open to any member of the public who is a motorist, but who is not a member of the Association, to apply for such a form and fill it in.

The Problem of Clashing Interests.

Meantime the Second Interim Report of the Departmental Committee on the Regulation and Taxation of Road Vehicles has been issued, and is found to contain a vast number of

recommendations for embodiment in an Act which it is intended shall codify the various laws on the subject, and supersede our admittedly quite obsolete enactments governing road vehicle use. In considering the recommendations, however, it is advisable that the medical man should avoid the error into which, apparently, most commentators on the subject have fallen when they have assumed that because these recommendations are made they will, in fact, become law. The Committee has endeavoured to do its best on behalf of each of the many classes interested, with the result that a careful consideration of the document, as distinct from a single glance at such parts of it as concern any one section, will bring before the reader more clearly than any other means known to me the fact that at this stage there exists a large number of specialized motoring interests which deliberately clash with a large number of other specialized motoring interests. For instance, the regulations recommended for the encouragement of utility motoring are admitted by those concerned with that branch to be extremely generous, though a certain amount of resentment is expressed in those quarters at the suggestion that drivers of machines whose situation prevents them from hearing readily, or becoming aware of the presence of vehicles desirous of overtaking them, should be provided with mirrors and with sound-receiving devices, it being held by the complainants that this is putting yet an additional burden on the commercial vehicle user for the benefit of the private motorist. But the driver of the passenger car knows how necessary are these and sundry other recommendations. The various speeds at which it is suggested that large vehicles should be allowed to go would, if permitted by a future law, make a great difference in the conditions under which private vehicles will take the road in future. Motorists are more or less paying for the maintenance of the roads, yet a consideration of the classes of vehicles which are to be allowed on them, including some wherein the speed is restricted to 5 m.p.h., and which, progressing at such a speed, will take pieces out of any at present known road surface, are matters which, we may anticipate, will be debated hotly in the House. There are special recommendations to encourage trailers; also the use of pneumatic tyres for large vehicles, particularly of the passenger-carrying, motor-omnibus types up to 3½ tons. Machines so equipped are to be allowed to travel at a very lively turn of speed indeed, and that despite the fact that the air-filled tyre is at present frankly in the experimental stages. Some very ugly accidents have happened when one of these tyres has blown off the rim, or punctured, or become suddenly deflated through a tube being pinched when negotiating a turn, or what not. The story of the pneumatic tyre as applied to heavy vehicles in this country is one with a high percentage of disasters for miles travelled. Yet few would grumble at any endeavour of a Government department to produce a law that would be, if anything, a little ahead of the times in exchange for all our other motor laws that are years behind them.

One private motorist described the very generous regulations proposed in regard to the use of various classes of utility vehicles as "a doctor's benefit," by which he meant that, if such regulations came into operation at once, we should have a great increase in the number of road accidents. Curiously, the report states that the Committee has come to the conclusion that "there is no evidence at the present time that would justify prohibition or restriction of the use of left-hand vehicles in this country from the point of view of public safety." This is certainly a remarkable discovery after the findings and recommendations of coroners' inquests all over the country, many of them presided over by medical men; also of the mounting toll of accidents due to the use of left-side driven machines, which, in any case, have to be pulled too far out on their wrong side when a driver wishes to discover whether it is possible for him to overtake the vehicle ahead before it can be ascertained whether the way is quite clear. The left-side drive is a very awkward one in the case of the covered classes of utility vehicles, including light tradesmen's delivery vans and the larger sorts of lorries, to say nothing of the "heavy" used trailer fashion. Many of the suggested regulations in regard to trailers, alike as to speed and to their permissible length, making them virtually road trains, while being very convenient from the point of view of those who would transport their goods by this cheap means, are certainly calculated to add increasingly to the embarrassment, if not to the dangers, of road travel, and to the costs of road maintenance.

Obtaining Evidence in Defence of Charges.

As regards the use of passenger cars, the chief alteration proposed concerns the abolition of the speed limit and the substitution of prosecution on the grounds of dangerous, or otherwise undesirable, driving. The report points out frankly that the 20 miles an hour speed limit is a dead letter in practice. It also plainly indicates that there ought to be an end of the present 10 miles an hour speed limits in specified areas. The latter is a sound conclusion, especially in face of the now notorious, and in many cases, long since forgotten prejudicial influences which were instrumental in securing permission to establish a great number of the fixed speed limit areas about the country. It is recommended, instead, that in all areas where it is necessary drivers should be warned by signs as to how slow a maximum speed is advisable and, for the rest, that there should be prosecution for all undesirable driving.

As to the period within which a motorist may be proceeded against for alleged undesirable driving, it is proposed that there should be an increase of from 21 up to 28 days within which the police may serve a summons. But it is intended that this should be offset, in part, by desiring the police to give to an accused motorist earlier notice than the formal summons of the intention to prosecute. This, however, does not go far enough, because if proceedings are to be undertaken under the heading of undesirable driving, obviously they are far graver than the current and past series of prosecutions chiefly on the lines of infringing what is admitted to be a purely arbitrary and obsolete law—namely, the present speed limit of twenty miles an hour. It is therefore doubly important that reasonable facilities should be provided for the accused to gather evidence upon which to conduct his case. Obviously if a driver is not to be told at the time he is alleged to have offended, how is he to reconstruct the conditions of driving, especially as it is not recommended that it should be compulsory to advise a motorist until the actual moment of serving the summons. An interval of twenty-eight days after the event, or even two days, would often render it quite impossible to collect witnesses or to take photographs of road conditions obtaining at the given time, and so on. Certainly this part of the proposed changes will be subject to much debate—a point which was brought out at length, with the adduction of numerous instances, in these columns something like a year ago when the matter of the abolition or increase of the speed limit was under review.

Minor Recommendations.

A very important recommendation is that tampering with motor vehicles should hereafter be regarded as a criminal offence. The penalties proposed to be imposed in respect of offences against dangerous driving, and so on, are none too severe provided the conditions of prosecution are reasonable. At present the conditions proposed are not reasonable, either in face of the penalties or in face of any other penalties that might be substituted. A sufficient guarantee is not proposed to be afforded to the accused that he will have what is even a reasonable opportunity of making out his case, apart from which there is the common belief that in the police force promotion is sometimes related to the number of prosecutions secured. Therefore it is necessary that much greater safeguards than any suggested should be provided in this connexion. The recommendations in regard to doing away with certain red-tape details about taking out licences are excellent, as is that to the effect that the police should have regard to the object of this proposed law, as distinct from working according to the letter and against its spirit. Unfortunately a recommendation like the latter is rarely embodied in an Act. If it were, still it would depend entirely on the given bench being prejudiced one way or the other as to whether it would have any weight in practice. The regulations proposed in connexion with the overhang in utility vehicles show that there is no intention to make improvement in this connexion. It is suggested by the Committee that the police should have the power to test brakes. This is a proposal of doubtful value. On the one hand it would virtually make the police responsible for all vehicles taking the road with efficient brakes in good working order, and, on the other, might lead to most vexatious and tyre-destroying demonstrations to satisfy the police. In any case, much clearer regulations and more closely limited powers than are indicated would have to be laid down.