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## Editorial.

### The Fifty-seventh Annual Report (1953) of King Edward's Hospital Fund for London

THE COUNCIL OF King Edward's Hospital Fund for London has every reason to feel the greatest pride in the wonderful work it is doing for the hospitals of London. Its fifty-seventh Annual Report for the year 1953 makes inspired reading, and one cannot help the thoughts that but for the "King's Fund" as it is affectionately called, the hospitals would by now be very discouraged indeed.

Since the Appointed Day, now over six years ago, astronomical and fantastic sums of money, running into hundreds of millions of pounds sterling, have been and are still being spent on the Health Service and State hospitals and patients. Yet hardly a new hospital has been built! A few very old ones have been patched up and a new wing added here and there. It is notoriously difficult to get really essential repairs done; for although much money is being poured into the hospitals, a very large percentage is swallowed up in salaries and wages.

Many amenities, which all of us who are closely connected with hospitals would dearly love for our patients and staffs, have to be indefinitely postponed—if not shelved for ever, for lack of funds. Wisely the Minister has allowed Leagues of Friends to come to the assistance of the hospitals for the very purpose of supplying amenities and extras, but these Leagues are still in their infancy and have many years of steady growth before them. And they are promising well.

In the meantime, however, we have the King's Fund, for which the hospitals are truly thankful, and may be forgiven for taking for granted, for it is so much part and parcel of the hospitals' hope and wellbeing. Reading interestedly through its list of Grants to Hospitals and Institutions one is attracted by the idea that the individual members of the Council and its various Committees under the gracious Presidency of H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester, must be very human people indeed. The nature of the grants are so varied, and many of them so thoughtfully designed to bring beauty, happiness, education, as well as new health for minds and bodies, proves that the distinguished ladies and gentlemen of the Council are serious and thoughtful; kindly and sympathetic; and in every way admirably suited to dispense the charities which are entrusted to them.

One sees, for example, the King's Fund kindly replacing an old garden shrubbery in a mental hospital, and improving and laying out gardens in many others;

modernising an old villa as a Preliminary Training School; buying new furniture for Nurses' Homes; re-surfacing tennis courts; rehabilitating a ward for geriatrics; providing new Theatres and Casualty departments; replacing worn-out boilers and central heating systems; giving new bedsteads and mattresses; new kitchens for old and new gas cookers; greenhouses and grass cutters; a Hydro-therapy unit for another mental hospital; warm pools for an orthopaedic unit; the extension of a thyroid unit; and even new carpets, loose covers and a vacuum cleaner!! Truly the King's Fund is the lovable Santa Claus of the London Hospitals. But the Fund does not only concern itself with the giving of bountiful and practical necessities to the hospitals at the present time. Its policy is to look ahead and prepare now for the future administration of hospitals. In order to do this, the Fund has opened resident Colleges for training future Matrons, Ward Sisters and Lay administrators, staffed by experts and wherein the students, who are carefully chosen, are helped to become leaders of the future.

The Staff College for Matrons is the newest of these ventures, and is established at 22, Holland Park, W.11, under its first Principal, Miss I. C. Warren, who was formerly Matron of the Royal Isle of Wight County Hospital, Ryde. The first eleven students have just completed the year's course, and no doubt they have benefited tremendously by the wonderful opportunities so freely bestowed upon them. To quote from the report:

"The one-year course is divided into three short terms in residence at the Staff College, and two periods of fixed work. It is not easy to give a brief outline of its content, since it is not academic in character, but aims at developing qualities of leadership, and at training the students in the understanding and handling of all those for whose work they will be responsible in the future. In modern social and economic conditions it is no longer possible to rely on the few 'born' leaders, or on the maxim that those in authority have only to give orders, which must be obeyed. Leadership or management calls for a blend of knowledge about a wide range of things, combined with skill in doing certain things. To this end it is a great asset to have a residential centre, where those who have spent practically the whole of their adult life in the hospital environment can live under conditions which encourage informal discussion, individual reading, and the development of a fresh outlook on hospital affairs and fresh interests in the world outside hospital."

What wisdom is contained in that paragraph: and could money spent in such a venture be better spent? It is surely providential that the King's Fund has the money and the intellectual councillors to propagate

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