

## King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER presided at the fifty-eighth annual meeting of King Edward's Hospital Fund for London at St. James's Palace recently. He referred to a special report about mental hospitals, recommending an allocation of £250,000 to be spread over three years and including three grants on a larger scale than usual. "It is an important report and I commend it to you for your consideration. There are some thirty-six large mental and mental deficiency hospitals which serve the Metropolitan area. The Fund has been getting to know them first-hand through a series of visits. There was never in our minds any doubt about the usefulness of help from the Fund, but a year ago the Management Committee appointed a Sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Ernest Pooley to consider carefully how best to give further help. The conclusions of this Sub-Committee are now before you.

"As the report points out, the factors which stand out most prominently today are, first, the legacy of old and often gloomy buildings inherited from the past which confront us on every hand. Until the nineteenth century there were, with the exception of Bethlem, almost no public institutions other than workhouses to which the mentally afflicted of London could go. But much building took place in the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century. Many of these buildings and airing grounds suggest that 'prison' would have been a truer description than 'asylum.' Much has been done to modernise the old buildings, and particularly to brighten them by plastering the brick interior walls, by redecorating in varied colours and by providing pictures. Much, too, has been spent, but it represents only a fraction of what is needed to modernise buildings of this size and age, let alone to provide them with amenities. Even if the Government and the regional authorities can increase the priority accorded to the mental hospitals, new needs and higher standards will quickly absorb whatever may become available. Against such a background the possibility of some help from outside sources such as Leagues of Hospital Friends, or from a body like the King's Fund, provides a stimulus and encouragement out of all proportion to the actual amount given. There is still an immense field for voluntary help.

"The second prominent factor is the change taking place in the whole attitude towards the mentally ill and in their treatment. The legacy of old buildings and of the old regime, coupled with financial stringency, has not admitted of changes in the patients' environment to keep pace with the great transformation in the methods of treatment in the last twenty years. But here and there pioneer work has been undertaken to provide, within the existing framework of the hospital, a more normal way of life and a much more cheerful environment for the patients. The report recommends that the Fund should sponsor three of the major schemes now being planned and also continue grants of the kind which they have been making for the last few years. The report presents, I am sure you will agree, a cogent argument that no more urgent claim can be made on the Fund at the present time, nor any more in keeping with its purpose and worthy of its support.

"It would have been possible to ask the Council for a still larger sum, which doubtless could have been used to good effect. But it is considered that £250,000 is the most that we can safely set aside at the moment, having regard to our other commitments, and to the fact that in December last £200,000 for two years was placed at the disposal of the Distribution Committee and £50,000 at the disposal of the Convalescent Homes Committee. The Fund must live within its income, and it has always been a cardinal principle that it should conserve its capital resources. It is, of course, due to this husbandry of resources that we are able to make the substantial allocations today. Fortunately the income from the

investment fund is buoyant, and there are encouraging signs that subscriptions and donations may again be forthcoming. Here I would like to ask all of you to do what you can to keep the claims of the Fund before the various business concerns and other bodies which have charitable funds at their disposal. Even a comparatively modest increase in our income from such sources would be a valuable supplement to our invested funds, and a great encouragement to our new Treasurer, Lord Ashburton."

Lord Ashburton, Treasurer, in moving the adoption of the Accounts, said that income for the year apart from special receipts amounted to £337,717, and there had been a modest increase in subscriptions and donations. Legacies had amounted to £24,253. This was less than usual but the current year showed signs of improvement. Expenditure for the year had amounted to £331,476.

Sir Ernest Pooley, Bt., Chairman of the Management Committee, presented the draft Annual Report of the Fund for 1954.

Mr. K. I. Julian, Chairman of the South East Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board, spoke of the problem of caring for the aged and of the help which the King's Fund was giving by co-ordinating the various services available to those who needed care at home rather than a hospital bed, but who often had to be admitted to hospital. By financing this co-ordinating service, the Fund was giving the four Metropolitan Boards valuable assistance in dealing with the great problem of hospital waiting lists. The work had begun experimentally in the South East Metropolitan Region four years ago, and from August it was to be carried on by the Fund at the request and on behalf of all four Metropolitan Regional Hospital Boards.

Sir Ernest Pooley, Bt., Chairman of the Management Committee, presented the Report of the Sub-Committee on Mental and Mental Deficiency Hospitals and moved that an allocation of £250,000 be made for these hospitals during the years 1955, 1956 and 1957.

The Rt. Hon. Malcolm McCorquodale, in seconding the adoption of the Sub-Committee's report, said that in the past five years the Fund had spent £136,000 on Mental and Mental Deficiency Hospitals. Of this, £30,000 had been spent on helping to improve the catering service. This was regarded as so important that it was proposed to earmark £50,000 of the new allocation for the same object. About £100,000 would be earmarked for grants for general amenities, as it was said on all sides that these grants gave encouragement and help far beyond their intrinsic value.

Finally, the Sub-Committee had been left in no doubt that for patients who had been successfully treated, there was a great need for means of rehabilitation to help them to adjust to the demands of everyday life. It was proposed, therefore, to earmark the remaining £100,000 of the new allocation for pioneer schemes with this object. One was for an occupation centre, one for a social centre, both within hospitals, and one for a community centre for out-patients. All aimed at providing purposeful activities for the patients and helping them to return to ordinary social relationships. Referring to the section of the report dealing with the staffing of mental and mental deficiency hospitals, Mr. McCorquodale said there was no doubt that this was one of the greatest problems in the whole field of hospital work.

### R.S.I. Museum to be Closed for Reconstruction

THE ROYAL SANITARY INSTITUTE announces that during the period of the reconstruction and modernisation of the Institute's Museum of Health which it is anticipated will take several months, the Museum will be closed to students and members of the public as from August 1st, 1955.

Further information will be made available later about the official re-opening date which is expected to be in the Spring of 1956.

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