

## THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

It is with great pleasure that we once again handle the Annual Report of the National Institute for the Blind for 1944-1945.

Great thankfulness is expressed that the Institute was able to maintain its services to the blind community during the War years.

Through enemy action the Institute lost members of their staff at the Sunshine Home for Blind Babies at Southport, which was completely destroyed, but not one of the babies was injured.

A development of welfare work running parallel to the successful placement of the blind in sighted workshops is illustrated by the opening of a Residential Hostel for Blind Industrial Employees at Wimbledon, administered by the Institute in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour. It accommodates 23 residents, men or women, and is at present full. Everyone seems to have settled down happily

through Parliament. Regulations make it compulsory for every blind child to be educated in a special School.

### Sunshine Homes and Nursery Schools.

There are now four Nursery Schools for Blind Children and one Nursery Home for Blind Toddlers.

Pages could be filled with lively anecdotes of what the blind little ones at the Nursery Schools say and do, each story showing that blindness is no bar to natural charm, quick wit and sparkling vivacity of childhood.

The children cannot be given sight, but they can be given almost everything else—the good food and pure air that build their bodies, the constant care and patient instruction that build their minds, and above all the golden atmosphere of a happy home that can cast its afterglow through all the years of their lives.

### Students' Library.

The production of manuscript Braille copies of books for blind students has been fully maintained throughout



An Anatomy Lecture by the blind Principal of the School of Physiotherapy.

and comfortably in this pleasant home, where all are able to enjoy fully their leisure hours at little cost.

### Training of Blind Physiotherapists.

The School of Massage has during the past year become "The School of Physiotherapy," as the term "massage" no longer expresses the wide range of treatments varying from electro-therapy to medicinal baths, which are now given by professional physiotherapists.

The number of students in the School is greater than at any time, and the premises have been enlarged; further important developments are afoot.

At the end of five-and-a-half years of war, blind physiotherapists are busier than they have ever been. A large number have been working in hospitals and public clinics throughout the country, and many others, to full capacity, in private clinics.

The work and skill of blind physiotherapists is becoming more widely known and appreciated by the Medical Profession.

### Education.

An Advisory Committee to the Minister of Education on Handicapped Children was appointed in February, 1945, under the Chairmanship of Mr. F. Messer, M.P., who is a member of the Council of the National Institute for the Blind, and did much to further the interests of handicapped children during the passage of the Education Bill

the year. The transcription of the books into Braille is done by a splendid band of voluntary writers who have not permitted the war to interfere with their devoted and unstinted service. At the rate of about 600 volumes a year they have built up a library which now amounts to 25,000 volumes.

### Homes for the Blind.

The Institute is happy to report that the arrangements made early in the War for the rehabilitation of the civilian war blinded proved more than adequate.

The total number of civilians in this country known to have been blinded by enemy action is 212 (85 women, 99 men, 18 boys, 3 girls, 7 infants) and of these, 125 have been or are being cared for at the Homes of Recovery, while all the infants have been admitted to the Sunshine Homes.

### Prevention of Blindness.

The Institute put forward a National Scheme for Ophthalmological Research at the request of the County Councils Association and the Association of Municipal Corporations, and which was adopted by them.

This plan had to be reconsidered in the light of the proposals for a National Health Service and it was found that the Government intended to repeal the Section of the Public Health Act on which the power of Local

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