

King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.

Report of Meeting of Council.

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER presided at a meeting of King Edward's Hospital Fund for London held on December 14th, 1949, at St. James's Palace. Speaking of changes in the organisation and outlook of the Fund, he said that the Management Committee had been giving careful consideration to the ways in which the Fund's resources could best be used in the new situation.

"First, there are the grants to the hospitals. They propose that a sum of £100,000 be again placed at the disposal of the Distribution Committee. Our policy in regard to grants made through the Distribution Committee is still cautious and conservative. There is, however, one important exception; I refer to the allocation agreed last June of £250,000 for homes for aged sick associated with the hospitals. This excellent scheme is making good progress, but the acquisition of suitable premises, and much else that needs to be done, takes time and it will be better to defer a full report until the next meeting of the Council.

"Secondly, we ask you to continue, for the present, a very substantial allocation to the Convalescent Homes Committee. A sum of £80,000 is proposed for this year. The Committee is pursuing an active policy which is showing definite results. A new spirit is abroad among the convalescent homes which is largely due to the encouragement we have been able to give to many little homes which had become somewhat isolated.

"Thirdly, there are grouped together a number of activities and projects for which we seek your support. Some of these are known to you as fields in which the King's Fund has already been able to make a significant contribution, such as Nursing Recruitment and the Emergency Bed Service. These were well rooted before the recent changes and have continued to be of the utmost value. Others, such as the Division of Hospital Facilities, the Staff College for Ward Sisters, the Training School for medical records officers at the Middlesex Hospital, and the projected Training Centre for hospital caterers at St. Pancras Hospital, were noticed at our last meeting.

"The most important new departure is the establishment of a Staff College for Hospital Administrators. Hospital administration in its widest sense has been the province of the Fund since King Edward VII stipulated that 'efficiency' must be taken into account when grants were made.

"We believe that the foundation of a residential staff college where the different interests can come together may prove a decisive event. We want the hospital administrators of tomorrow not only to be efficient but to work out for themselves how to let the humanity which is the essence of the hospital shine through and illumine the administrative detail. We are therefore taking counsel with others interested, and notably with the Institute of Hospital Administrators, as to how best to achieve this result; we have acquired premises; we have appointed a small committee. We have been fortunate in persuading Mr. Constable, the present House Governor of St. George's Hospital, to

resign his hospital appointment and become the first head of the new college. Some months must yet elapse before the College can be opened, but we anticipate that when we meet here in the summer it will be possible to name a definite date. In all this we have the very warm backing of the Ministry of Health."

His Royal Highness then called upon Sir Wilson Jameson, who said:—

"The hospital part of the National Health Service is administered in typical British fashion by committees—committees of men and women who, at no small cost to themselves, give generously of their time to voluntary service. But a large modern hospital—still less a group of hospitals—cannot depend for its day-to-day management upon a committee however willing and competent its members may be. Just as a business must have a managing director so must a hospital have a chief administrator—and hospitals now constitute one of the largest, most complicated and costly enterprises in this country.

"In the Metropolitan Regions there are more than 120 Hospital Management Committees each with a chief administrative officer and there are, in addition, several hundred senior officers in charge of unit hospitals. Though hospital management calls for special inborn qualities of mind and spirit, much can be done to develop and strengthen these qualities by an enlightened system of training. In some countries training in hospital administration is provided by universities, but in England such provision on any scale is most unlikely, though in the teaching of the subject some of the methods of university instruction might well be used.

"So here is a real need that the Fund can meet. The proposal is to provide a College of Hospital Administration—in part residential for students, in part a centre for the exchange of ideas between existing administrators, members of boards and management committees, doctors, nurses and others connected with hospital work. Wisely conducted such an institution will do much to raise the standard of hospital administration in this country.

"I am sure this College is something of which the Council will one day be very proud. I am just as sure that it will be of great assistance to the Ministry of Health in the humane and efficient development of our national hospital service."

Sir Edward Peacock, Treasurer, said that the total estimated income was £644,000, of which £253,000 was ordinary revenue (mainly from investments) and the balance from the Nuffield Trust for the Special Areas, and from legacies. The estimated expenditure for the year had been increased by the special allocation of £250,000 for homes for the aged sick. This involved the spending of all but £47,000 of the year's receipts, an unusual procedure which it was not proposed to follow in subsequent years as it was customary to transfer large legacies to reserve.

Maternity and Child Welfare Annual Conference.

We have been notified that arrangements are now being made to hold the Annual Conference on Maternity and Child Welfare on June 28th, 29th and 30th of this year, at Friends House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

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