

likely that the extraction of special fractions of the blood will have still wider applications to the treatment of disease in future."

PROF. HILDA LLOYD, PRESIDENT, ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS, SAID :—

"Obstetrics owes more than any other branch of medicine to the excellent work of the Blood Transfusion Services, and as President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists it gives me the greatest pleasure to have this opportunity of paying the highest tribute I can to the role the many donors have played in this speciality.

"During the last 10-15 years the maternal mortality in this country has been improved beyond all expectation by the introduction of this service, together with the extensive use of chemo-therapy in cases of infection. There must be hundreds of mothers who owe their lives to the unselfishness of blood donors who have come forward so willingly and regularly to give their blood for this purpose.

"As you can imagine, this service entails a team of workers well trained in the details not only of collecting the blood but also of examining and classifying the donors' blood, which must be compatible with the recipients' blood.

"In the practice of obstetrics it may be necessary to give a patient a blood transfusion during her pregnancy—or labour or after completion of the labour—and it follows that all women of child-bearing age must have their blood carefully grouped so that should they require a transfusion the matching of the donor's blood is then unnecessary. All maternity hospitals and departments throughout the country have organised this service and the majority of them include a Flying Squad Service which attends patients in their homes and takes blood with them so that mothers can be transfused in their homes and so save valuable time which would be wasted transferring them to hospital. The equipment taken in the ambulance includes not only the necessary personnel of doctor and midwife but also everything that may be needed to treat a case of shock or hæmorrhage. I hope I have been able to tell you briefly how important this service is to the pregnant mother and how very much we are indebted to all the blood donors for their share in this valuable work."

H.R.H. THE PRINCESS ROYAL THEN ADDRESSED THOSE PRESENT :—

"It has given me great pleasure to be here today and to present these awards. The giving of more than 50 donations of blood is an act of service to humanity which we do well to honour with these badges. I hope that they will be a source of pleasure and just pride to those who have received them and that others will regard them as a cause for admiration and respect.

"You donors whom we honour here today and those others whom, though unable to be present at this ceremony, we honour equally in their absence, have set a shining example to those who have not yet enrolled on the panels of the National Blood Transfusion Service, the Scottish Blood Transfusion Association and the Greater London Red Cross Transfusion Service. Your achievements have also been a source of encouragement and inspiration to those other donors who will be receiving silver and bronze badges at ceremonies held in different parts of the country during the next two months.

"I wonder how many people have the imagination to visualise what the blood given by these donors has meant in terms of lives saved, suffering mitigated or health revived, of fathers restored to their families, wives to their husbands, or children snatched from death and reunited with their parents?

"As I listened today to the weighty words spoken by the distinguished Presidents of the Royal Colleges representing the three branches of medicine, I could not help but be struck by the tremendous advances in medical treatment, surgery and obstetrics made possible by blood transfusion.

"Much has happened since the late Percy Lane Oliver and the British Red Cross Society led the way with the establishment of the first transfusion service in the world—the Greater London Blood Transfusion Service, which was founded in 1921 to provide direct transfusion from donor to patient. In 1939 and 1940 regional transfusion centres were opened in England and Wales by the Ministry of Health, and shortly after the National Blood Transfusion Service was formed; later it came under the administration of the Regional Hospital Boards as part of the National Health Service. In Scotland the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Association—a voluntary body grant-aided by the Department of Health—was founded in 1940.

"The war called for a tremendous expansion of these services. The challenge was met, and by 1944 the national panel of blood donors exceeded one million. In the years immediately after the war, when the urgent need seemed to have passed, the strength of the panel fell, as was perhaps only natural, to little more than a quarter of a million.

"From that low point it has been built up again by the energies of the regional organisers, supported by publicity, and the National Blood Transfusion Service now has a panel of 430,000 donors. But this is not enough—we need a panel of 600,000 donors to ensure the meeting of all demands, to avoid undue calls upon loyal donors and to provide a reasonable reserve of blood plasma.

"In Scotland the story has also been one of rise and fall and recovery, but another 30,000 donations of blood each year are needed to reach the desired total of 80,000.

"The position of the Red Cross Greater London Blood Transfusion Service is a little different. Although the Service lost half its donors after the war it has now almost recovered its strength and needs only a hundred or so more enrolments to secure an adequate panel of 2,500 donors.

"Blood is a precious substance, for which *there is no substitute*. I hope that the splendid example of those whom we honour today, both present here and absent, will act as a stimulus to others, especially the younger generation, to follow their lead. I hope, too, that the words of the Presidents of the Royal Colleges will have helped to bring home to those who may not have thought much about it before what a vital service is performed by blood transfusion. To save life, to relieve suffering, to restore health: what greater service to the sick can be rendered than this?

"I am happy to have had this opportunity not only of honouring blood donors by presenting their awards but also of saying to them and through them to all other donors on the different panels, 'Thank you,' on behalf of those thousands, whom you will never know, whose lives you have saved and whose health you have restored with your blood."

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH (MR. HILARY MARQUAND) ended the ceremony and said in part :—

"This has been a memorable occasion. We are particularly sensible of the honour conferred upon us by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal in so graciously consenting to take part in this impressive ceremony. I know well, your Royal Highness, the great personal interest you always show in the health services and the welfare of the sick and suffering. On more than one occasion when I was Minister of Pensions I was able to show you hospitals for the war disabled and to discuss with you the treatment of their injuries. I found that your knowledge of these matters was very great. I also know that in the North of England where you live you are a frequent and welcomed patron of many activities in this field. By your participation you have fittingly emphasised the unique character of this occasion and of the outstanding achievement of the blood donors whom we honour here today. As to the significance of the contribution which blood transfusion has made to medicine, there can be little doubt left in the minds of those who have heard or will read the testimony of the Presidents of the three Royal Colleges, whose presence here today has been so much appreciated."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)