

sense have already proved their worth. These techniques can be applied in new ways and to different conditions. In this country, as well as in the Commonwealth, this work will be developed in conjunction with workers in preventive medicine. Close liaison will be essential, also, with workers in pathological laboratories particularly those concerned with virus studies. The task of matching identifiable symptom-presentations to actual viruses will be largely undertaken by this unit.

The therapeutic research unit will develop further a process of "facilitation" of the work of others. This catalytic activity may be considerably extended if plans for the therapeutic unit are implemented. Much remains to be learned of the performance of therapeutic agents, both old and new, in the field of general practice in which many of them find their greatest range of use. Clinical trials techniques devised in hospital may not be appropriate in general practice and here new methods must be worked out, with the help of many colleagues.

These are, then, the corner-stones of the Research Foundation. Other units may perhaps be added in the future, but we must always be aware of the circumstances in which they were conceived. In less than ten years, during which a financially insecure profession was adjusting itself to a National Health Service, the loyalty and devotion of many hundred spare-time volunteers laid for us the corner-stone of a Foundation. While we look back at their work with modest pride we must look forward into their future with confidence in them, and in ourselves.

THE REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON DOCTORS' AND DENTISTS' REMUNERATION*

The strength of the College lies largely in its firmness in refusing to be drawn into medico-political controversy.

In the application of scientific medicine to the field of family medicine and in the organization of medical practice for the benefit of patients there is enough to keep our members fully employed for a long time to come. Nevertheless, the report of the Royal Commission on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration is an important document, of interest to all medical men. If accepted it will undoubtedly set the financial standards of the profession for many years. It therefore behoves all to read the report closely.

The only really controversial issue is the suggestion of a special

*Royal Commission on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration 1957—1960. *Report Cmd. 939*. 1960. H.M.S.O. London. Price 15s. 0d.

fund of £500,000 per annum "to be provided expressly to recognize distinguished general practice by additional remuneration". It is not for us here to argue the merits of this recommendation, though in passing we may notice that the College in its methods of screening for membership recognizes there that are degrees of excellence amongst general medical practitioners as in all other walks of life. We are intimately concerned with the last paragraph on this subject in which the Commission expresses the "hope that when such a scheme is under consideration advantage will be taken of the advice of the College of General Practitioners upon the criteria which might properly be used".

Such a recommendation is a great compliment to a college which has been in existence barely eight years and certainly redounds to the credit of those who have so ably guided our policies.

In its search to find satisfactory criteria for membership, the College has collected valuable material. In the process of selecting members it has gained great experience in the application of this material. However, the Commission in its report envisages criteria for choosing practitioners whose work is outstanding. This recommendation may or may not commend itself to the profession, but Council has decided that it would be a useful exercise to study for its own purposes what constitutes "better" general practice. Are there indeed any special criteria which should be looked for over and above those already considered in the screening of applicants for membership? An *ad hoc* committee has been set up to enquire into and report on this question.

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

During the last six years the postgraduate education committee of the College has come nearer to obtaining a glimpse of the plan of continuing education of the family doctor. To have made even this progress is satisfactory, but the committee have still not been able to find out what is the best method for the family doctor.

Most doctors, we are told, are too busy and have not the time for periodic refresher courses. This may be so, but the increasing responsibilities that the community imposes on the doctor make it essential that the College should periodically examine the facilities provided for the postgraduate education of the family doctor, so that it may be able to give guidance not only to the planner but also to those seeking after knowledge.

In the fourth annual report of the College are listed thirteen