

## Editorials

### POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL CENTRES

**I**N HIS annual report for 1966 the chief medical officer to the Ministry of Health remarks on "the striking upsurge of post-graduate medical centres". There are now 180 on the drawing boards—some have already been opened for several years, many are building. At a time when the medical profession—in general practice and in the hospitals—is said to be disillusioned and so discontented that many are leaving the country and more are threatening to go, the remarkable fact about these centres is that they have all been created by local initiative and with finance which has been largely raised locally and by the doctors themselves. Through the wisdom of the Ministry of Health nearly all have been sited on land adjoining the district hospitals and in most cases the rent for the land has been nominal.

In the conception and design of these centres there has been a degree of harmony which a few years ago would not have been possible. The profession has demonstrated that it is prepared to go a long way to improve the means at its disposal for postgraduate study. But this is only one of the benefits these centres will bring; they are multipurpose buildings, with lecture halls, libraries, restaurants and club rooms. They are designed for use by all branches of the profession and if all those in general and hospital practice and in the local government service use them as they are intended to be used and if no one branch of the profession tries to make a monopoly of the facilities offered, they should help greatly in bringing about a fuller understanding and respect for each other's work which is so badly needed. Postgraduate education in medical practice is not a one-way traffic. The general practitioner can and must contribute to the furtherance of medical science; he must be prepared to teach as well as to learn. This need not necessarily be by formal teaching, though the set lecture and the presentation of clinical material still remain the mainstays of postgraduate education. The exchange of experiences, of reminiscences, the discussion of personal cases over a glass of beer, or a cup of coffee, the *tête a tête* over a meal, all these sharpen the intellect so that by sharing present problems, future difficulties will be met more readily and with a mind refreshed. This kind of education, which cannot be measured by the session, and therefore, cannot otherwise be rewarded than by the satisfaction and pleasure that it brings, is just as valuable as any more elaborate kind.