

family doctors, but the pool of latent activity within the College membership and throughout its faculties is much of it as yet imperfectly used.

Annis Gillie

GENERAL-PRACTITIONER HOSPITALS

THE Hospital Plan for England and Wales was presented to Parliament in January 1962. The threat it contained to close many of the small general-practitioner hospitals throughout the country aroused immediate wrath; not only by general practitioners but also in the conclaves of the local authorities many bitter things were said. The reasons put forward by the authors of the plan were those of efficiency and economy. To many readers the real impulse behind it lay in the title of the report. A plan must be neat and tidy and purposeful in its objective. Sickness and ill-health are seldom that, and any attempt to plan for their management is full of pitfalls.

The South-east of England Faculty has carried out a survey to ascertain the use made of the hospitals amongst the members and associates of the College in their area. The report on their investigations was published on page 638 of the November *Journal*. It is stressed that the views expressed in the report are those of practitioners who by virtue of the connection with the College represent the keener type of doctors, and is therefore not representative of general-practitioner opinion in the area. But if it is conceded that it embodies the opinions of the more interested doctors, it is surely all the more valuable for that. We believe that better family doctors are to be found in those areas where there are hospitals in which they can work, and the report of the South-east of England Faculty bears out that the presence of an active hospital is much valued by those who are so lucky as to be able to use it.

The South-east of England Faculty covers one of the largest areas in the country and contains the greatest number of members and associates. This report, therefore, carries considerable authority. The writer points out the need for further surveys in other faculties. The South-west of England Faculty are already in the process of collecting information and as announced elsewhere they are holding a symposium on the subject at Torquay on 6 June 1964.