

new sources of inspiration, part of their talents as well as those of their potential teachers will lie idle.

Through our associateship, open to all doctors even before they leave the shelter of hospital and wherever their future may carry them, we welcome all whose aim it is to foster and promote the fullest development of general practice. In turn we expect and look for academic co-operation from those specialists or family doctors who, from choice or necessity, base their work elsewhere.

The College has no monopoly of this desire to quicken the pace of research or to extend the range of medical education in general practice. It does, however, happen to have the lion's share of family doctors who would be doing most of the work in such new ventures. One such venture, namely, to develop a research and educational "institute" within the College (*Annual Report*, 1954, p. 15) is now being canvassed by others as their own panacea. It would surely be unfortunate if separate departments or institutes of general practice, financed independently or with public funds, were set up in rivalry with our College. The Olympic spirit will best be served, not by many flames of different hue, but by many torches carrying light from the one torch.

RESEARCH INTO GENERAL PRACTICE

GENERAL practice is undergoing one of those periodic eruptions which seem, in these democratic days, to be common to all trades and most professions. The present unrest has been occasioned largely by the realization that good medicine can only be practised in a good professional environment. The College is an academic body and has refrained from entering the lists with those other organizations which tirelessly strive to obtain better financial rewards for their members. But from its inception the College has realized that good medicine can only be practised in good functional surroundings, and much thought and experiment have been given to practice organization and method. The only part of the Gillie report which we have found difficult to accept is the paragraph which states that there was little factual evidence of what goes on in general practice. We have followed with great interest the steady flow of reports from general practitioners about many aspects of their practices and of the operation of the kindred social services. Never before has so much effort been expended in attempting to

portray general practice. The analysis of Lees and Cooper in 1963 covers 37 papers. These authors point out that there is a danger that future work will not take into account what has gone before and consequently will not be easily comparable.

The enquiries undertaken by the College and its members have not been confined to the consulting-room and its environment, but have embraced all those occasions when, and places where, the family doctor comes into contact with other workers in the field of health. The partnership with the health visitor is a case in point. The report of a joint working party of the College and The Royal College of Nursing was published in 1961. At that time the attachment of health visitors to general practitioners was rare; it was strongly recommended by the Working Party. The report of DR C. D. BAKER on page 171 of this *Journal* shows how far this policy has been implemented. Co-operation with hospitals and the provision of diagnostic facilities for the general practitioner has always been advocated by the College.

How much use one country doctor makes of the hospitals is reported by DR L. A. C. WOOD on page 223. He has the entrée to the pathological department but no x-ray help, and he finds that 90 per cent of his work can be conducted without reference to the consultant and hospital services. The survey by DR H. B. KEAN on the early care of mother and child on page 189 brings to the notice of members several experiments which are at present being made towards co-operation between the general practitioner, the hospital and the local authority.

These are examples of work done with the encouragement and financial help of the College through grants which it has attracted. Every number of this *Journal* contains reports of research into general practice. Slowly and surely, by individual and combined effort by College members, facts which the Gillie subcommittee thought hard to find are being collected, but cold facts and figures though doubtless important and impressive can never give a proper picture of what general practice really is.