

THE COMMONWEALTH FUND

REPORT FOR 1955-56

THE thirty-eighth annual report of the Commonwealth Fund, for the year ending June 30, 1956, again stresses its appropriation to the universities to assist them in strengthening and improving their programmes of medical education. Of total appropriations of 15,140,154.82 dollars, 12,600,000 dollars was in unrestricted grants to nineteen universities for this purpose, and the report reviews in some detail the Fund's efforts to assist the medical schools of the United States during the past ten years. Of its total appropriations of about 40 million dollars, 51 per cent has been for medical education, mainly to some forty universities and medical schools, while medical research, experimental health services and advanced fellowships carried on in universities and by various types of organizations account for another 37 per cent of the total. The principle of giving unrestricted grants to universities for medical education emphasizes the Fund's conviction that medical education occupies a position of critical significance to the future of medicine, that its needs are urgent and the opportunities presented of exceptional promise, and this section of the report discusses with insight some of the basic problems presented by medical education and especially the fundamental questions whether medical education should continue to be a university function and the objectives of a university that require it to have a medical school.

Besides this new policy of granting unrestricted funds to universities for this purpose, grants totalling 559,723 dollars were made for nine specific projects or programmes in this field, of which six were new. The University of Vermont College of Medicine received a grant to enable the Department of Preventive Medicine to offer active leadership in the planning and organization of community health and medical facilities. A grant to the University of Virginia School of Medicine was to provide a programme for more effective care of ambulant patients and to assist students in the first year of study to learn something of the circumstances in which patients came to medicine for help. Baylor University College of Medicine received a grant for the purchase of television equipment to be used in teaching physiology and the State University of New York College of Medicine at Syracuse one for training pediatric educators which will facilitate a planned programme of post-resident experience.

In medical research, which received 717,546.60 dollars, the Fund has sought to concentrate its efforts in three areas likely to contribute new knowledge and increased understanding of man as a total organism. Of twenty-five programmes conducted during the year with Fund assistance in seventeen university medical schools, teaching hospitals or research laboratories, ten centred on the long-term relationships between chronic disease and social environment, the multiple social, emotional and physical factors which influence growth and the development of personality and pertinent neuropsychiatric problems; eight explored the complexities of the body's integrative mechanisms—the neurological and the endocrine systems and particularly their reaction under stress; and the remaining seven were concerned with basic physio-

logical phenomena, particularly cellular phenomena. To the conventional method of project support the Fund has added the policy of fluid subsidies in modest amounts to enable individuals or departments of recognized distinction and competence to follow in any direction promising leads uncovered in their current research and develop them to a level where they can command project support on their own. One such award made during the year was to Prof. T. Puck, of the Department of Biophysics, University of Colorado School of Medicine, who has recently developed a unique plating method which makes possible the growing of whole colonies of cells from almost every cell.

Twenty-three fellowships were awarded during the year for advanced training, study and experience in medicine and closely allied fields, totalling 383,310 dollars, and the Fund this year inaugurated a new programme of special awards in support of creative work, designed for men of proved scholarly or scientific productivity in the health or medical sciences. The two awards during 1956 under this programme were to Dr. Florence Powdermaker, to complete, in collaboration with Dr. Z. De Fries, research for a monograph on a hitherto undescribed type of character disorder, and to Dr. Clayton Loosli, professor of preventive medicine, University of Chicago, to analyse original data collected on the structure of mammalian lung tissue and on the origin and development of bacterial blood infection.

Block grants were made to educational and professional institutions for the education of nurses at the master and doctorate levels, and in the programme of international fellowships, for which 712,915 dollars were allotted, 46 Commonwealth Fellows were selected to spend a year of study and travel in the United States in 1956-57. These included four Home, five Dominion and two Oversea Civil Service Fellowships, and in addition second-year extensions to complete their studies were granted to fourteen of the forty-five Fellows currently in residence.

THE BRITISH COUNCIL

REPORT FOR 1955-56

THE annual report of the British Council for 1955-56 (pp. vi+94+6 plates. London, 1956) takes the form of a general survey of the year's work, with some impressions of the Council at work by its chairman, Sir David Kelly, and an article on the teaching of English overseas, together with the usual appendixes such as lists of officers and committees, analysis of expenditure, statistics of university interchange, overseas visitors, courses and lecture tours, etc. More than half the literate population of the world speak English as a first or second language or use English as an indispensable instrument for vocational purposes, or are studying the language. In recent years about half the world's output of scientific literature has been published in English. Nevertheless, English will not become established as a world language without serious and systematic encouragement, and the special article describes the steps which the British Council is taking,