

BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION

Viscount Alexander of Tunis inaugurated the British Heart Foundation on Tuesday this week. At the same time an appeal to the public for funds was launched. The Foundation has been set up to promote research into the causes, prevention, and treatment of heart disease; and also to promote health education and the rehabilitation of sufferers from diseases of the heart and blood-vessels. It contemplates research expenditure at the rate of at least £500,000 a year and has set the target for its first appeal at £3½m. Already £1¼m. has been subscribed or covenanted by industry and by private persons. The Foundation comes forward under powerful auspices with Prince Philip as its patron, Lord Alexander as president, Dr. Maurice Campbell as chairman of its council, and Sir Charles Dodds, P.R.C.P., and Professor John McMichael as chairman and vice-chairman respectively of the science committee which is to advise on the allocation of funds. The council includes delegates nominated by the Royal Colleges in England and Scotland and by the College of General Practitioners.

Cardiovascular diseases are the biggest single cause of death in Britain: 281,000 deaths in England and Wales in 1961.¹ They also account for much invalidism and incapacity. The extent of the challenge is thus undoubted. The hope is that by providing a body in this country devoting itself exclusively to the problem of cardiovascular disorders the Foundation will be able to accelerate the gathering of useful knowledge. It is interesting to note that bodies with similar aims exist already in Canada, Australia, and the United States.

It is one thing to have high and worthy aims and another to translate them into practice, particularly where scientific research is concerned. But if the Foundation's statement about its method of approach is lived up to the outlook would seem decidedly promising. The Foundation "will attract research workers into this field by offering them the most advanced technical equipment, and affording them continuity of effort, and personal security and status." It will also provide career opportunities and special training for science graduates and technologists, physicists, chemists, and statisticians to equip them to work in cardiological research teams and with doctors in clinical practice. The emphasis on continuity of effort and personal security is especially welcome. The Foundation's scientific committee plans to maintain a balanced programme of research by (1) supporting existing projects where progress, "as is only too frequently the case," is handicapped by shortage of money; (2) selecting new research schemes to support; (3) encouraging physiological research into the circulation; (4) supporting metabolic studies, particularly in relation to arterial disease; and (5) supporting research in the basic sciences where this might contribute to increased understanding of human cardiovascular disease. Where international co-operation would be

useful the Foundation will work with its opposite numbers abroad. Health education will be promoted through the Chest and Heart Association, and the rehabilitation of cardiovascular patients will be assisted by supplementing the grants provided through the established welfare authorities. Some more information about the Foundation is given in an advertisement which we print on p. 10.

BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Dr. Charles Hill, who has been given a life peerage, has had a remarkable career. After being deputy medical officer of health for Oxford he came to the B.M.A. as Assistant Secretary in 1932, was Deputy from 1935 to 1944, and became Secretary after Dr. G. C. Anderson's death in 1944. He retired from this position when he entered Parliament in 1950. Hill has occupied several offices of state; was made a Privy Councillor; and has been a member of the Cabinet. Some little time ago he indicated to Mr. Macmillan that he would not seek re-election as a Member of Parliament. His great gifts in organization and administration are finding outlets in the business world; but his many friends and admirers will hope that his energy and varied talents will still continue to be applied in the public service.

Two leading British surgeons are honoured with the knighthood. Mr. Arthur C. H. Bell has been president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists since 1960, the year in which the College, owing largely to his energy and initiative, was able to move into its fine new building. As obstetric surgeon to the Westminster and other hospitals Mr. Bell has made many distinguished contributions to his specialty, and his many friends throughout the Commonwealth have first-hand knowledge of the enthusiasm with which he has gone out to give the benefit of his experience and skill in their countries. The knighthood conferred on Professor John Bruce is welcome recognition of his splendid work as president of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh from 1957 to 1962 and as regius professor of clinical surgery at the University there since 1956. After serving in Norway and Burma with distinction during the war, for which he was appointed C.B.E., Professor Bruce returned to consultant appointments at Edinburgh, where he rapidly established his reputation as an authority on the surgery of the gastrointestinal tract. We are delighted to welcome also the knighthoods conferred on two Australian medical men—Mr. I. B. Jose, consulting surgeon in Adelaide, and Dr. O. E. J. Murphy, consultant physician in Brisbane and an authority on tropical medicine.

Among those appointed C.B.E. it is a pleasure to record the names of some distinguished clinicians, including Dr. D. Evan Bedford, consultant cardiologist at the Middlesex Hospital, Dr. E. R. Cullinan, consultant physician at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and Professor C. A. Wells, professor of surgery at Liverpool University. And his many friends inside and outside the B.M.A. will be gratified to note the O.B.E. conferred on Dr. Edward Walker, the Scottish Secretary.

¹ *The Registrar-General's Statistical Review of England and Wales for the Year 1961*, Part I, Table 19, 1963. H.M.S.O., London.