

Surely, Sir, the correct procedure for "Home Posting" and others who regard their period of National Service as a waste of time is to do their National Service as a private soldier before studying medicine, and thus avoid the "utter frustration" which he describes.—I am, etc.,

"IN ARDUIS."

Opportunities for Medical Practice

SIR,—I write with reference to the very stimulating article (*Journal*, May 14, p. 1171) entitled "Opportunities for Medical Practice at Home and Abroad" by Sir Stanley Davidson, professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh. Attention was drawn by Sir Stanley in particular to the serious position of Scottish and Irish graduates in relation to employment. Well, Sir, there are excellent opportunities in the Royal Australian Navy for medical officers, and bright prospects for advancement for keen young men. There are now two hospitals officially recognized for the residency requirements for registration—namely, Balmoral Naval Hospital in Sydney and Flinders Naval Hospital near Melbourne, both of which have a panel of regularly visiting consultants. Rates of pay have recently been raised. These, with conditions of service, may be obtained from R.A.N. Liaison Officer, Australia House, London, W.C.2. While such splendid chances of progress are available to United Kingdom doctors in a rapidly developing and expanding country such as Australia there is no need for despondency regarding employment. Medical officers who are physically fit and of the right type will be very welcome in the Royal Australian Navy, where a very real job of work awaits them. Entry of graduates can be effected by the Australian Naval Liaison Officer in London, to whom completed application forms should be sent. Medical examination can be arranged at the nearest naval depot or hospital in England or Scotland, and, if passed as fit, subsequent interview would take place in London. Medical officers who enter the R.A.N. from abroad for a period of four years are granted a first-class passage for themselves, wives, and families to Australia. Return passages, however, are not granted.—I am, etc.,

Melbourne, Australia.

L. LOCKWOOD.

"Over-the-counter" Spectacles

SIR,—From time to time there appear in the press scare-provoking protests against "over-the-counter" glasses. The latest appeared in *The Times* on June 30, where it was reported that the conference of the North Regional Association for the Blind had recommended the Ministry of Health to suppress their sale. To what end?

I have been an ophthalmic surgeon for 50 years, and spent most of the time as a senior consultant to an important eye hospital, to a school for the blind, and to a large school clinic, and I have yet to come across an eye that has been visually damaged by glasses, however wrong or wherever bought. Temporary discomfort and inadequacy, perhaps; but such symptoms are not unknown with medically prescribed glasses. And patients usually have the common sense to discard unhelpful glasses just as they do opticians' and even oculists' misfits. I have known cheap glasses from stores to be a boon to hundreds of presbyopes with small means, and, I repeat, no damage to sight has been done.

As for the possibility that the treatment of some chronic disease may be delayed—in these days a remote chance—I seem to remember the same argument when ophthalmic surgeons sought to deny the right of opticians to prescribe glasses. After all, there was a time, historically not so very long ago, when only "over-the-counter" glasses were available, and electric light and sewing-machines had not yet replaced the candle and the fine hand-sewing. According to the scaremongers, blindness should then have been rampant, but was it—at any rate from that cause?—I am, etc.,

Portsmouth.

W. S. INMAN.

Obituary

CHARLES DONALD, O.B.E., Ch.M., F.R.C.S.

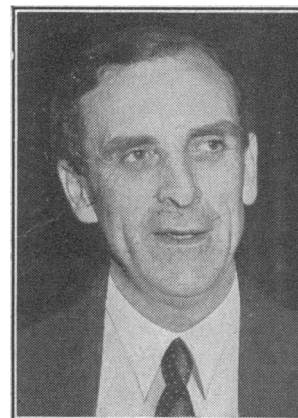
Mr. Charles Donald, surgeon to the London Hospital and the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, died at the Royal Masonic Hospital, London, on July 8, aged 59.

Charles Donald was born on February 14, 1896, the son of John Donald, of Aberdeen. From Robert Gordon's College he went on to the University of Aberdeen to study medicine, graduating M.B., Ch.B. in 1922. During the first world war he served as a combatant, first as a lieutenant in the Gordon Highlanders and later in the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force, in which he became a flight commander, being mentioned in dispatches. After qualifying and holding resident posts at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Donald was appointed house-surgeon to the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street. By this time he had decided on a career in surgery, and in 1925 took the F.R.C.S. of England. Five years later he proceeded to the Ch.M. of Aberdeen with a commendation. His first post at the London Hospital was that of surgical registrar, but it was not until 1933 that he obtained the appointment of assistant surgeon there, and two years later he joined the staff of the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street.

His special interest in thyroid surgery was encouraged by his appointment as surgeon to the London County Council's thyroid clinic at New End Hospital, and in time he became one of the leading authorities on thyroid surgery. But he was always a general surgeon, and during the course of his career contributed papers on a variety of surgical subjects to the medical journals. So far as children's surgery was concerned he was particularly interested in developmental errors in the neck, a subject on which he published a paper in 1938.

A popular teacher at "The London," he was always ready to help the newly qualified and was a very active supporter of the students' clubs. For a short time before the war he served on the Medical Students and Newly Qualified Practitioners Subcommittee of the B.M.A. During the second world war he served in the R.A.M.C. as a lieutenant-colonel from 1940 to 1942, when he was promoted to brigadier and appointed consulting surgeon to the Middle East and Central Mediterranean Forces. From 1944 to 1945 he was consulting surgeon to Southern Command. Mentioned in dispatches early in 1944, he was appointed O.B.E. in April of that year. On demobilization he retired with the honorary rank of colonel, but he relinquished his commission in 1946 owing to ill-health. On his return to practice in London Mr. Donald was appointed to the staff of the Royal Masonic Hospital.

For some time his health had not been good, and two years ago he had to give up much of his professional



(Kensley Picture Service)