

adequate volume of extracellular fluid, some explanation must be sought for the different urinary composition in the young child. He thought the apparent immaturity of renal function in the newborn might be adapted to the greater total, and particularly extracellular, fluid volume at and soon after birth. If this were so, it might be that the newborn child provided more of its continuing water requirements from extracellular fluid than did the adult or older child. It did seem, however, as if the newborn child, like other young animals, arriving as it did with 15% more body water than the adult, was well prepared for the restriction of its fluid intake which was one of the features of the first day or two of life. This different water content and distribution in the young baby, in combination with kidneys which did not conserve sodium after injury as closely as the kidneys of older children and adults, suggested that the apparent immaturity of the infant kidney was a useful biological device.

Other papers read during the meeting dealt with cystic hygroma, portal hypertension in children, septic umbilical arteritis, funnel-chest deformities, eventration of the diaphragm, and the use of colon for reconstruction of the oesophagus.

## INSTITUTE OF PATHOLOGY AT NEWCASTLE

### OPENING BY SIR HAROLD HIMSWORTH

The new Institute of Pathology (illustrated below) at Newcastle General Hospital was opened by Sir HAROLD HIMSWORTH, F.R.S., Secretary of the Medical Research Council, on July 28. The Institute provides accommodation under one roof for three laboratory services until now largely separated: the pathology department of the hospital, which also serves many hospitals outside the Newcastle Group; the Public Health Laboratory Service's laboratory which deals with Northumberland, most of Tyneside, and part of North Durham; and the Blood Transfusion Service's regional laboratory and headquarters. The directors of the three departments are Dr. B. E. TOMLINSON, Dr. A. I. MESSER, and Dr. SHEILA MURRAY, respectively.

### Unity of Medicine

After the chairman of the Newcastle Regional Hospital Board, Mr. E. F. COLLINGWOOD, had welcomed the guests, Sir HAROLD HIMSWORTH spoke. The new Institute had a twofold significance, he said. It brought to the region laboratory facilities in keeping with the needs of modern medicine; it remedied deficiencies under which they had long laboured. But over and above this it embodied an imaginative appreciation of future trends. In every branch of natural knowledge technical advances opened up new possibilities of progress in contingent fields. At this ceremony, said Sir Harold, many of his audience would be remembering James Spence, whose ideas pervaded so much forward thinking in medicine. It was Spence's virtue always to see beyond institutions to their purposes; as he had never failed to maintain, human endeavour was not

independent of its instruments, and its whole course could be diverted by inappropriate arrangement.

Medical knowledge was indivisible, continued Sir Harold, yet the demands of practice had created specialties, and nowhere was this more true than in pathology. Hospital pathology was tending to become divorced from public health work, and services like blood transfusion from both. That those engaged in these different activities should be separate specialists was probably inevitable, but that they should become isolated from each other was not. If they were to make their essential contribution to the advancement of medicine and their activities were not to degenerate into mere elaboration of technical expertise, then they must be brought into one community, living, working, and thinking together. This was the outstanding contribution of the new Institute. It united in one home the specialists of three separate but related services.

After Sir Harold's address the building was blessed and dedicated by the Archdeacon of Northumberland, the Ven. I. H. WHITE-THOMSON.

### The Building

The Institute is sited between the gynaecological ward and the old hospital. Its construction involved the demolition of the former hospital department of pathology and a chapel. The Institute is a four-storeyed building, with a reinforced-concrete frame and floor. The ground floor, partly below ground level, is largely the preserve of the Blood Transfusion Service. Here there are rooms for bleeding and for the use of blood donors; laboratories, staff rooms, and offices; and a large blood bank, sterile room, and crystalloid laboratory. On the ground floor also is some of the hospital pathology department—the mortuary, viewing-chapel, and undertaker's room; the post-mortem rooms and students' gallery; and various staff rooms. However, most of this department is accommodated on the first floor, where are the histological, haematological, and biochemical laboratories; examination- and waiting-rooms for out-patients; and space for a combined museum and lecture room, and a photographic section. The Public Health Laboratory occupies the second floor, and besides its working-rooms there are laboratories for research, virology, and epidemiology, and the Service's regional administrative offices. On this floor also is a library for the use of all three departments. The top floor of the Institute is designed as an animal house.

The Institute, which covers some 68,000 sq. ft. (6,300 sq. m.), cost £240,000. Construction began in January, 1954, and was virtually complete in June this year. The architects were Messrs. Scherrer and Hicks, of London.

### MEDICAL INSURANCE AGENCY

The annual meeting of the Medical Insurance Agency was held on July 26. Professor R. B. Green and Dr. Dougal Callander were elected members of the committee of management for three years, and the following were re-elected for the same period: Dr. Janet Bottomley, Sir John McNee, Mr. R. L. Newell, Dr. Henry Robinson, Sir Arnold Stott, and Dr. E. R. C. Walker. The report of the committee disclosed a new high level of service to the medical and dental professions, reflected in an ever-growing total of rebates on premiums. The audited statement of accounts for the year 1955 was adopted, and allocations to medical and dental charities were approved which, by the use of the covenant system, will result in their benefiting by an amount of about £22,000. The constantly expanding business handled by the agency on behalf of its clients has entailed the acquisition of additional premises, which have been secured in Flaxman Terrace, closely adjacent to the back of B.M.A. House. The staff has also been much augmented for a similar reason; and the new premises enable the accommodation required for them to be adequately provided. The total premium income collected by the agency is now almost two million pounds a year. Dr. James Fenton was re-elected chairman and Dr. Henry Robinson was re-elected hon. secretary.

