

the responsibility of the doctor of their choice in the group. The group should provide a 24-hours service to patients and also proper off-duty and holiday relief for its members."

The Ministry Committee on General Practice which drew up this definition recognized that in some rural areas the potential number of patients could not support more than two practitioners and did not consider that such a case should be ruled out. The Minister has also accepted this view.

#### Outline of Proposals

The Ministry has decided, in consultation with the G.M.S. Committee, that assistance should take the form of interest-free loans which will normally be recoverable by quarterly deductions from the remuneration payable by executive councils to individual members of the group. The sum to be set aside annually for the purpose, together with the sums repaid on the loans, will be known as the Group Practice Loans Fund.

An application for a loan will, in the first place, be made to the executive council, who, in consultation with the local medical committee, should forward it to the Ministry with their comments. It will then be referred to a committee to be called the Group Practice Loans Committee, composed of representatives of the medical profession and the Ministry, for a decision. The committee will advise the council in each case whether a loan should be made, and, if so, the amount to be lent. It has been decided not to prescribe a standard term of years for these loans, but that the period of repayment should depend so far as possible on the circumstances of a particular application. It is thought that the normal period should be 10 years and should not in any case exceed 20 years.

The council will then enter into a contract with the members comprising the group. It will be essential for the group to draw up an agreement among themselves which may or may not form part of their partnership agreement (if any). Details of the nature of the loan agreement between the executive council and the group may be obtained from the executive council concerned. All expenses, including those of the council, incurred in drawing up and executing the necessary legal documents will be borne by the group and will not be included in the loan.

#### Uses of the Loan

Assistance by means of these loans will be available for the following purposes: (a) the erection of a new building, either on land already owned by one or more of the members or on land which may have to be acquired for the purpose and for the acquisition of such land; (b) the acquisition of an existing building and its conversion into surgery premises; (c) the conversion of a building already owned by a member of the group.

It is essential that the premises should be used for the purposes for which the loan is made for a period of years substantially longer than the duration of the loan, and as a minimum the period should be 21 years. Applicants must be willing to accept this condition. Application for a loan may be made by general practitioners taking part in general medical service who propose to form a group practice or who, having formed a group, propose to provide new practice premises or substantially to improve the existing premises.

#### Additions to the Group

Where a group wish to admit a new member either as an addition to the existing group or to fill a vacancy, whether in formal partnership or not, admission to the medical list will be subject to the same conditions as if the members of the group were in formal partnership—that is, the right to replace a member can be assumed, though additional members, whose names are not already included in the medical list in the locality, will not normally be admitted in a restricted area. Agreement should be reached between the members in the first place as to the new member's share of liability for the outstanding or continuing loan.

## EXCHANGE VISITS WITH CANADA AND THE U.S.A.

The scheme for exchange visits between members of the American, British, and Canadian Medical Associations, which has the approval of the Bank of England, will be continued this year.

#### Procedure

Three doctors from Britain may visit Canada in exchange for three doctors from Canada. Each doctor from Britain will be required to make all his own travel arrangements and will also be required to deposit up to £200 with the B.M.A. in London. On arrival in Canada he will receive the equivalent in Canadian dollars. Similarly, each Canadian doctor on arrival in Britain will receive the sum deposited in sterling.

Three doctors from Britain may visit the U.S.A. in exchange for three doctors from the U.S.A. Each doctor from Britain will be required to make all his own travel arrangements and will also be required to deposit up to £200 with the B.M.A. in London. On arrival in the U.S.A. he will receive the equivalent in U.S. dollars. Similarly, each U.S. doctor on arrival in Britain will receive the sum deposited in sterling.

#### Duration of Visits

The duration of the visits is left to the discretion of the doctors concerned. The American, British, and Canadian Medical Associations cannot accept any responsibility for a doctor who allows his visit to outlast the money placed at his disposal.

Applications are invited from members of the B.M.A. to take part in such exchanges during the next financial year—i.e., April 1, 1954, to March 31, 1955. Each applicant must state the object of his visit. (This is not a scheme for the exchange of appointments or practices.) Medical practitioners in all branches of the profession, including general practice and public health, are eligible. Applicants should also give approximate dates of the visit desired. (Successful applicants will in due course be required to furnish exact dates and details of travel.) Applications must be received by the Secretary of the Association by March 1, 1954.

---

## WAVERLEY EVIDENCE COMMITTEE

The following have been co-opted to the special committee set up by the Council (see *Supplement*, December 12, 1953, p. 229) to prepare the Association's evidence to the Waverley Committee on the Provision of Medical and Dental Services for the Armed Forces: Dr. E. R. Boland, Brigadier D. C. Bowie, Mr. H. Parker Buchanan, Sir Zachary Cope, Sir George McRobert, Dame Louisa Wilkinson, Dr. Lena Williams.

---

## SPRINGFIELD MATERNITY HOME, BLACKBURN

A report of the questions asked of the Minister of Health in Parliament about this matter and his replies will be found under "Medical Notes in Parliament" in this issue of the *Journal* (p. 281). The matter is to be raised again by Mr. H. Hynd (Member for Accrington) on the adjournment.

---

**Correction.**—In the report of the proceedings of Council (*Supplement*, January 23, p. 19) it was stated that Dr. Jean Chappell had been appointed to the Association's Constitution Committee. It should have been Dr. Joan Chappell.