

of 1915. With the amounts allotted at the meeting on June 15th, the total distributed to medical charities from the first amounted to £2,100. The Chairman concluded by recommending the Committee, in accordance with precedent, at once to make the interim grants mentioned in the opening of this article from moneys accumulating in the Medical Benevolence Account since the beginning of the year, and this was done.

The amounts allotted during 1914 and 1915 and for the first six months of this year are shown in the following table:

Grants.	1914.	1915.	1916. First Six Months.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Royal Medical Benevolent Fund ...	105 0 0	230 0 0	150 0 0
Royal Medical Benevolent Fund Guild	52 10 0	160 0 0	100 0 0
Epsom College Benevolent Fund...	78 15 0	145 0 0	100 0 0
Royal Army Medical Corps Officers Benevolent Fund	—	50 0 0	25 0 0
Royal Medical Benevolent Fund Society of Ireland	26 5 0	30 0 0	—
Royal St. Anne's School ...	10 10 0	15 15 0	—
Lancet Editors' Fund ...	15 15 0	—	25 0 0
Belgian Doctors' and Pharmacists' Relief Fund	26 5 0	—	—
Total ...	£315 0 0	£630 15 0	£400 0 0

This result cannot but be satisfactory to all those medical men who have insured through the Agency; not only has there been a considerable saving in their own expenditure, but it has been possible to make substantial contributions to medical charities without making any call upon the finances of the profession itself. We believe that the advantages and aims of the Agency have only to become more widely known in order that the financial assistance it will be in a position to give to medical charities in future years shall be even more substantial. The success of the Agency is very encouraging, and reflects the greatest credit upon the chairmen. The first chairman was the late Dr. Radcliffe Crocker, and on his death the office was accepted by Dr. G. E. Haslip, who has taken the greatest possible interest in the work, as has the Agent and Secretary, Mr. Guy Elliston, from whom particulars of the policies—life, accident, motor-car, and others arranged to meet various needs—can be obtained on application to the Agency, at 429, Strand. The Committee has lost by the regretted death of Sir Frederic Hewitt, a member nominated by the *Lancet*, who always showed deep interest in its work and greatly assisted in making it better known. The vacancy thus caused will be filled at a subsequent meeting of the Committee.

"NEURONE" OR "NEURON."

By W. M. BAYLISS, F.R.S.,

Professor of General Physiology, University College, London:

I MAY perhaps be permitted to make a few further remarks on this question, since it appears from various representations made to me that an agreement on the spelling of the name is desirable.

It is stated by Barker in his *Nervous System* that the Greek word from which Waldeyer derived the name which he suggested for the nerve cell, including all its processes, is "νευρών." If this be accepted, it is clear that, in order to make the *o* long, it must be spelled in English with a final *e*, just as, in fact, it was spelled in French from the first. But, on referring to the course of lectures given by Waldeyer in 1891 (published in the *Deut. med. Woch.*, 17), in which it is generally stated that the name was originally suggested, I have been unable to find any mention of the Greek word from which it was formed. Indeed, no use is made of the new name until the summary in the last lecture (p. 1352), where it appears in brackets in the plural form, "Neuronen," as an alternative name for "Nerven-einheiten." It is possible that the derivation may be given in some other publication, but I have been unable to trace it. Further, as Professor Sherrington has pointed out to me, the word *νευρών* is

not to be found in classical Greek; we have *νεύρον* or *νευρά*. It must therefore be a coined word. Professor Barker refers to the opinion of a Greek scholar that it would be justifiable on the analogy of *παρθενών*, the part of the house set apart for the young women. Thus it may be taken as suggesting something on a higher scale, or greater degree of complexity, than would *νεύρον*, itself an appropriate name for the axis-cylinder process, which forms the unit element of the nerve trunk. It may be remembered that Sir Edward Schäfer proposed this use, although it has not met with general recognition. Notwithstanding the somewhat doubtful etymology, it seems preferable on the whole to adopt the spelling "neurone," partly in remembrance of the proposer, partly because this is the spelling used by the greater number of English-speaking neurologists, and also because it serves to convey the suggestion of a compound unit built up of constituent parts.

However much we may regret, with Sir Edward Schäfer, that it has been found necessary to have a special name for the nerve cell merely on account of the confusion caused by its happening to possess a particularly long process, the word "neurone" cannot now be displaced. It must be admitted, nevertheless, that the suggestion is apt to be conveyed to the student that the degeneration of a nerve fibre is a totally different process from that which occurs in a part of any cell when separated from the nucleus.

As to the names for the constituent part of the neurone, it is unfortunate that the Greek *ἄξων* has the *o* long. If we take the point of view put forward above, it is certainly preferable to use the form "axon" for the axis-cylinder process. This, indeed, appears to be the usual custom. It may reasonably be held that the precise etymological form of a word should not militate against a spelling which is of more scientific value. The distinction between "axon" and "neurone" in respect of the final *e* serves to convey a physiological fact. It may be said also that *ἄξων* is the root. Similarly, "dendron" is the best form for the other processes, while "dendrites" may be used for the finest ramifications, as is, in fact, done by Dr. Mott. No satisfactory name has yet been suggested for the body of the cell containing the nucleus. Waldeyer himself speaks of it as the "nerve cell." But this is clearly misleading. Indeed, it seems almost impossible to avoid the conclusion that the use of "nerve cell" will have to be discontinued altogether. "Cell body" is sometimes used for the part surrounding and including the nucleus, although a name which implies the presence of the nucleus would be preferable. "Peri-karyon" has been suggested, but it seems to exclude the nucleus itself, and is rather clumsy. Would "karyon" serve? I think it need not be supposed to refer to the nucleus alone since we have another name for that, but doubtless a better word may be found.

I would, then, venture to suggest that we should agree to use "neurone" for the whole nerve cell, "axon" and "dendron" for the parts. This, indeed, conforms to the practice of Dr. Mott and others; it also has the approval of Sir Edward Schäfer. "Neuron," as liable to ambiguity, should be dropped altogether.

ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT FUND.

At the last meeting of the committee, held on Tuesday, June 6th, eighteen cases were considered and £190 was voted to seventeen of the applicants. The following is a summary of the cases relieved:

Widow, aged 40, of L.R.C.P. Edin. who practised at Cliffoney, co. Sligo, and died in 1912. After her husband's death applicant opened a sweet shop in Scotland, and managed to get on until she had to undergo an operation in May, 1915. The Fund then made her a grant of £10. In April, 1916, her shop was blown up by a bomb from a Zeppelin, and all her stock and furniture destroyed, and she was not insured. Now wants help to re-establish herself. Voted £15.

Widow, aged 45, of L.R.C.P. Edin. who practised in the East End of London and died in December, 1915. Applicant is partially paralysed, and was left practically unprovided for at her husband's death, and has had to live on the small sum the practice realized, of which only about £70 is left. Has one son, aged 6 years. Has no home, and is staying with relatives who have promised to give all they can, which only amounts to £13 per year. Voted £10 in two instalments.

(To be continued.)