

of rheumatic fever would be instantaneously and automatically recorded, or again the fall of temperature resulting from shock might be observed during the progress of a major operation. But besides registering the temperature of a part of the body at any particular moment Callendar's recorder may be made to register the difference between the temperatures of any two parts—e.g., the difference between the axillary and the rectal temperatures. This is done by using two separate terminals, one of which is placed in the axilla and the other in the rectum; the difference in temperature between the two bulbs is recorded in a single curve. The difference between the axillary and the rectal temperature is sometimes considerable (as in cholera) and this is a subject that may repay further study. Should the investigation prove fruitful it is to be hoped that someone may devise an instrument of smaller dimensions and less cost.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

C. REISSMANN, M.A., M.D. Cantab., B.Sc.,
Adelaide, South Australia. M.R.C.P. Lond.

BRITISH HOME AND HOSPITAL FOR INCURABLES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Amongst your notices of "Donations and Bequests" I see the name of the late Mr. William Sutton, M.D., but you do not mention a legacy of £250 left to this institution by him. If only out of justice to the deceased gentleman I shall be glad if you will insert this in your next issue.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

April 29th, 1904.

EDGAR PENMAN.

WELSH MEDICAL DINNER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It has been decided to hold a Welsh medical dinner at Prince's Restaurant, Piccadilly, London, W., on May 25th, 1904, at 7 for 7.30 P.M. Sir John Williams, Bart., has kindly consented to preside. Gentlemen intending to be present or to introduce guests are specially requested to give notice in writing to either of the honorary secretaries as soon as possible. A general meeting will be held at 6.30 P.M., at which all should endeavour to be present, to discuss the advisability of instituting an annual reunion.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

T. P. BEDDOES, } Honorary Secretaries.
WILLIAM LLOYD, }

63, Wimpole-street, Cavendish-square, W., May 3rd, 1904.

TESTING THE EYESIGHT OF THE NATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—With reference to a recent article in the *Times* newspaper under the above heading, which is commented upon in THE LANCET of April 16th, I am authorized by my council to state that the Optical Society, which is mainly a scientific society, as I show in my subsequent quotation of its objects, does not at this stage commit itself to any definite opinion on the sight-testing question nor can it accept responsibility for the views of individual members; moreover, it does not organize or conduct examinations or grant "diplomas" of any sort whatever.

In the article I quote it is mentioned that the *Optician and Photographic Trades Review* is stated to be the official organ of the Optical Society. That journal is the official medium for the publication of the society's notices and proceedings but it is in no sense authorized to voice independently the opinions of the Optical Society as a body. Moreover, I have the authority of the editor of the *Optician and Photographic Trades Review* for the assertion that neither he nor the *Official Journal* had anything to do with sending out the so-called "circular communication."

As a matter of interest to your readers I shall be glad if you will permit me to state that the objects of the Optical Society (which was founded in the year 1899) are: (1) to promote intercourse between those interested in the science of optics in the United Kingdom, the colonies, or foreign countries; (2) to foster and to disseminate knowledge of optical matters among its members; (3) to arrange lectures, discussions, and demonstrations on optical science and optical instruments; (4) to provide its members with

information on all optical subjects of interest; (5) to promote the establishment, adoption, and recognition of standard sizes, gauges, calibres, templets, and methods for universal use with all optical and other scientific instruments; and (6) to print, publish, sell, lend, or distribute the proceedings or reports of the society or any papers or communications on optical science or subjects connected therewith.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

W. SALT, honorary secretary.

Hanover-square, London, W., May 3rd, 1904.

THE TENURE OF OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It is extremely satisfactory to note that the Local Government Board has recently in some instances signified to district councils its willingness to consider favourably applications made as to the reappointment of medical officers of health without limit of time where the officers in question have been in office some years and have discharged their duties satisfactorily. The duties which have to be discharged by a conscientious medical officer of health are so important and often so diametrically opposed to the views of some individual members of a district council that where after a trial of two or three years a medical officer of health has satisfied the Local Government Board as to his discretion and competency that body should certainly see to it that the public do not lose a valuable servant through the caprice of a district council.

The reappointment without limit of time is as essential for rural district medical officers of health as for urban if sanitary reforms, which are at the present time a pressing necessity, are to be satisfactorily achieved. I have in mind more particularly at this instant the cleanliness of our milk-supplies. It is a matter of common sense that reform in this direction should begin at the fountain head—in short, with the cow. Security of tenure is essential if the medical officer of health of a rural district council is fearlessly to enforce the provisions of the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Order and of the Model Regulations framed by the Local Government Board under Art. 13 of that order. No district council should have the power to terminate the appointment of a medical officer of health except on the ground of his incompetency and then only with the approval or endorsement of the Local Government Board.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

May 2nd, 1904.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In THE LANCET of April 30th, p. 1239, one of your correspondents drew attention to the fact that the Dolgelly rural district council had fallen in with the suggestion of the Local Government Board and appointed its medical officer of health "without limit of time." Probably few of your readers are in a position to appreciate the great practical importance of what appears to be a small administrative detail. No apology need therefore be offered for emphasising the advantages that would accrue were the Local Government Board invariably to take this course and were all local authorities equally amenable to advice from headquarters.

Under present conditions the majority of provincial medical officers of health are appointed for a short term of years, usually, indeed, for one year only. This means that at the end of that term a medical officer who has refused to prophesy smooth things or has been in any way too active may be got rid of by the simple process of refusing to vote for his reappointment. It also means that every year the jerry-builder, the slum-owner, and the crank have a golden opportunity of making themselves more than commonly offensive by publicly objecting to the reappointment. In many districts this is a chance which is never missed, as the writer knew to his cost when medical officer of a small urban district. In such circumstances it can hardly be a matter for wonderment if the nature of the average official sometimes is subdued to what it works in, like the dyer's hand, and that annual reports tend to become too complacent. To take a concrete instance, it requires no small amount of force of character for the medical officer of a rural district to insist on dairy and cowshed regulations being strictly enforced when he knows that nearly every member of his authority is both by interest and by