

THE LANCET RELIEF FUND.

THIS Fund, which came into operation on the 1st of February, 1889, has for its Almoners the President of the Royal College of Physicians of London (Sir RICHARD DOUGLAS POWELL, Bart., K.C.V.O., M.D. Lond.), the President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (Mr. HENRY T. BUTLIN, D.C.L., LL.D.), the President of the *Almoners.* General Medical Council (Sir DONALD MACALISTER, K.C.B., M.D. Cantab., LL.D., D.C.L., F.R.C.P. Lond.), and the EDITOR of THE LANCET (S. SQUIRE SPRIGGE, Esq., M.D. Cantab.), with Sir JOHN TWEEDY, F.R.C.S., as Honorary Auditor.

FOR the guidance of those seeking assistance and of those desirous of recommending deserving cases, it may be useful to record that THE LANCET Relief Fund is sustained solely by the Proprietors of THE LANCET, who provide every January the sum of at least £300, which is administered free of cost, with the object of affording *Scope of the immediate pecuniary assistance to registered medical practitioners, or to their widows and orphans, in Fund.* cases of distress and emergency, by the grant of money by way of loans free of interest, or gifts, as the circumstances of the various cases may require. In the case of widows and orphans, in order to come within the scope of the Fund, the death of the Husband or Father must have been of recent occurrence.

WHEN the Fund was inaugurated considerable misapprehension existed as to the precise objects for which it had been established, and, as a result, the majority of the earlier applications, being cases of *chronic* distress, and not coming, therefore, under the designation of *emergency*, could not be entertained. As the *Chronic Cases Almoners still receive applications for assistance for cases which are obviously of a chronic Ineligible.* character, it is thought advisable to append a statement concerning cases of this nature which appeared in THE LANCET of Feb. 16th, 1889:—

“We are requested by the Almoners to state that, from the character of a number of the applications received, both personally and by letter, for relief, it is evident that in many cases the object for which this Fund has been established is not quite clearly understood; and if relief had been afforded in the cases of those who suffer from chronic distress the Fund would have been completely exhausted within the first few days of its existence. They would therefore be greatly obliged if those readers of THE LANCET who may be asked to endorse applications would carefully peruse the Application Form and explain the precise object of the Fund to those applicants whose cases do not seem to come within the scope of the purpose for which the Fund has been established, which is to afford prompt aid to registered medical practitioners, or to the widows or orphans of members of the profession, who, in consequence of the supervention of some unexpected emergency, which is not likely to recur, have pressing need of immediate and temporary pecuniary relief”—

And who, it may be again pointed out, are likely to be benefited permanently thereby.

Twenty-first Annual Report of the Almoners,

For the year ending December 31, 1909.

In presenting their Twenty-first Annual Report, the Almoners have to record that the balance in hand on Dec. 31st, 1908, was £267 1s. 2d., to which on Jan. 1st, 1909, the Proprietors of THE LANCET added the sum of £300, making a total sum of £567 1s. 2d. available for grants during the year 1909.

The number of applications for assistance received by the Almoners during the year was 27, of which number 4 were rejected by the Secretary as quite outside the scope of the Fund; 2 were declined by the Almoners after due consideration; 7 application forms were not returned—doubtless owing to the applicants realising that their cases were not of a nature qualifying them to receive assistance from the Fund; and 14 applicants were relieved by gifts or loan of money ranging from £10 to £25. The relief of these 14 cases, a detailed list of which is given in the accompanying Statement of Accounts, involved the expenditure of the sum of £235. The total amount voted by the Almoners since the commencement of the Fund is £6354 6s. 3d.

As in past years, the Almoners have received expressions of gratitude for the assistance which they have afforded to applicants—in some urgent cases the relief being given within a few hours of the application being received. Thus the timely help of the Fund has enabled more than one applicant to keep his practice together when pressing claims

threatened to destroy his home and his means of livelihood; and the widow and the orphan have also been helped at the moment of their greatest need.

Mr. Henry T. Butlin, D.C.L., LL.D., having succeeded Sir Henry Morris as President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in July last, thereupon became an Almoner of the Fund, and kindly consented to act as such. The Almoners desire to record their warm appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the Fund by Sir Henry Morris during the period of his Almonership, and to congratulate him upon the honour of a baronetcy conferred upon him by His Majesty.

It is with profound regret that the Almoners have to record the death, in March last, of their colleague, Mr. Thomas Wakley, Editor of THE LANCET, who, with his father, the late Thomas Wakley, founded the Fund in 1889. Father and son took a keen interest in the Fund, and thereby in the struggles of the poorer members of the profession, and it is a source of gratification to the present Almoners to know that the sympathetic work of father and son is to be carried on by the present Proprietors of THE LANCET—all members of the Wakley family. To fill the vacancy created by the death

of Mr. Wakley, the present Editor of THE LANCET (Dr. Squire Sprigge) has been appointed an Almoner.

The Almoners have also to record with regret the death of the Honorary Auditor, Sir Thomas Smith, Bart., K.C.V.O., F.R.C.S. Eng., who succeeded the late Sir Henry Pitman in his office, and whose interest in the Fund was none the less sincere and valuable because his tenure of the post was, alas, so brief.

In conclusion, the Almoners would point out that they will at all times be glad to have their attention called to any cases of genuine distress coming within the scope of the Fund, but they trust that those recommending cases or giving testimonials will first take steps to satisfy themselves of the *bona fides*, as well as of the suitability, of such cases before endorsing them. In the administration of such a Fund as this the Almoners are of necessity largely guided in their decisions by the testimonials accompanying the applications.

(Signed)

R. DOUGLAS POWELL.

HENRY T. BUTLIN.

DONALD MACALISTER.

S. SQUIRE SPRIGGE.

Feb. 7th, 1910.

THE LANCET RELIEF FUND.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DEC. 31st, 1909.

DR.	£	s.	d.	By Loan:—	CR.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Balance at the London and Westminster Bank, Limited (Westminster Branch), Jan. 1st, 1909	...	267	1	2	Case No. 825	25	0	0
„ Proprietors of THE LANCET, Jan. 1st, 1909	...	300	0	0	By Gifts:—						
					Case No. 807 (voted 1908) ...	15	0	0			
					„ 810 („ „) ...	15	0	0			
					„ 808 ...	20	0	0			
					„ 812 ...	10	0	0			
					„ 816 ...	15	0	0			
					„ 817 ...	10	0	0			
					„ 823 ...	10	0	0			
					„ 824 ...	15	0	0			
					„ 826 ...	10	0	0			
					„ 827 ...	10	0	0			
					„ 830 ...	15	0	0			
					„ 832 ...	20	0	0			
					„ 834 ...	10	0	0			
					„ 836 ...	25	0	0			
					„ 837 ...	10	0	0			
									210	0	0
					Balance at Bank, Dec. 31, 1909 ...				332	1	2
									£567	1	2
									£567	1	2

We find by the Banker's Book that the actual Balance on Jan 1st, 1909, to the credit of the Fund was £267 1s. 2d., to which the sum of £300 was added by the Proprietors of THE LANCET on Jan. 1st, 1909. The balance at the Bank on Dec. 31st, 1909, was the sum of £322 1s. 2d.

We have examined this statement and compared it with the Vouchers and Bank Account, and find same correct.

Jan. 31st, 1910.

SLADE, LEWIS, and SLADE, Chartered Accountants.