CORRESPONDENCE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND.

To the Editors of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY.

DEAR SIRs,—I have read the article in the December, 1945 copy of the British Journal of Ophthalmology headed Memorandum on the Notification and Certification of the Blind. The figures quoted are those for the year 1942 and I enclose a copy of the latest statistics (1945) for the information of the writer of the article.

In paragraph 2 of the article there is a reference to the definition of blindness for school children, viz., "too blind to be able to read the ordinary school books used by children." This definition has been replaced by the following; "blind pupils, that is to say, pupils who have no sight, and whose sight is, or is likely to become so defective that they require education by methods not involving the use of sight." This new definition is contained in Statutory Rules and Orders, 1945, No. 1076.

I do not quite understand the figures for the L.C.C. mentioned on page 658, the total certified plus the number rejected for the period 1935 to 1943 come to 8953, whereas it is stated that the total is 10917.

With reference to the statement on page 660 that there are many "old people who are not registered as blind because they are receiving Old Age Pensions already." If the pension is non-contributory and the persons are under 70, they would normally not be granted a Pension unless they are registered blind persons. If they are over 70 or are in receipt of contributory old age pensions, they would not, if blind, receive supplementary pensions. The Assistance Board are precluded from paying supplementary pensions to old age pensioners who are blind, and a considerable number of applicants for supplementary pensions are passed each year by the Assistance Board to the Blind Persons Authority for certification and registration as blind persons.

Yours faithfully,

F. R. BARNES, Secretary.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH,
WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.1
May 30th, 1946

SHEET No. 1

REGISTER OF THE BLIND

STATISTICS OF THE REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1945*

TOTAL BLIND POPULATION REGISTERED ON THE 31st MARCH, 1945																							
TABLE I—AGE PERIODS												TABLE II—AGE AT WHICH BLINDNESS OCCURRED											
REGIONAL ORGANISATION		0-1	1-5	5-16	16-21	21-40	40-50	50-65	65-70	Over 70	UNKNOWN	TOTAL	0-1	1-5	5-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	Over 70	UNKNOWN
Northern Counties Association ...	4	49	478	339	2844	2486	6393	3556	10310	28	26487	3226	788	1010	1337	1591	2008	2912	4046	4920	4071	573	
Southern Regional Association ...	4	104	660	513	3721	3354	8818	4340	16081	94	37689	4010	909	1031	1882	2423	2763	3831	5434	6226	6846	2334	
Western Counties Association ...	1	24	147	89	456	487	1290	731	2953	—	6178	690	126	183	296	406	468	695	1083	1146	1085	—	
Wales and Monmouthshire Regional Council ...	—	8	84	69	465	503	1163	610	2443	59	5404	559	109	115	222	292	352	548	810	1007	868	522	
England and Wales Totals, 1945 ...	9	185	1369	1010	7486	6830	17664	9237	31787	181	75758	8485	1932	2339	3737	4712	5591	7986	11373	13299	12870	3434	
England and Wales Totals, 1944 ...	8	201	1376	1018	7494	7056	17946	9596	31291	159	76145	8495	1897	2335	3718	4670	5609	7997	11500	13565	12814	3545	

* NOTE Owing to special difficulties one local authority has been unable to supply the whole of the figures for 1944-45 and where these were not available the relevant returns for a previous year have been used.

SHEET No. 2

FIGURES AT 31st MARCH, 1945*

TABLE IV—TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT—AGE PERIOD 16 AND UPWARDS																							
REGIONAL ORGANISATION	NORMAL			MENTALLY DEFECTIVE			PHYSICALLY DEFECTIVE			EMPLOYED			UNDERGOING TRAINING			Trained but unemployed	No training but trainable	Unemployable	TOTAL	Number of persons over 70 years of age included in Table IV in (i) Unemployable and (k) Total			
	In schools for the Blind	Other schools	Not at school	In schools for the Blind	Other schools	Not at school	In schools for the Blind	Other schools	Not at school	TOTAL	BY BLIND ORGANISATIONS	(a) Work-shops	(b) Home Workers	(c) All others not included in (a) or (b)	(d) Total employed						(e) Industrial	(f) Secondary	(g) Professional or University
Northern Counties Association	335	17	25	13	2	63	3	1	19	478	1477	355	1050	2882	241	30	17	103	131	22552	25956	10259	
Southern Regional Association	414	24	91	15	8	81	3	2	22	660	1299	948	2379	4626	299	51	43	301	191	31410	36921	15995	
Western Counties Association	112	4	5	—	—	22	1	—	3	147	171	132	588	891	40	16	3	—	—	5056	6006	2891	
Wales and Monmouthshire Regional Council	51	8	2	1	2	19	—	—	1	84	320	87	217	624	40	5	2	20	12	4609	5312	2443	
Totals, 1945	912	53	123	29	12	185	7	3	45	1369	3267	1522	4234	9023	620	102	65	424	334	63627	74195	31588	
Totals, 1944	914	52	142	26	16	174	6	4	42	1376	3343	1493	3974	8810	629	88	44	428	348	64213	74560	31108	

* See NOTE on Sheet No. 1

SHEET No. 3

FIGURES AT 31st MARCH, 1945*

TABLE VI—PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY DEFECTIVE (all ages)											TABLE VII—UNEMPLOYABLE TEACHERS OF THE BLIND PERSONS Resident in:—				HOME TEACHERS OF THE BLIND
REGIONAL ORGANISATION	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	TOTAL	(a)	(b)	(c)	Number employed (a few employed part-time only)		
	Mentally Defective	Physically Defective	Deaf	Deaf-mute Included in Col. C.	Combination (a) and (b)	Combination (a) and (c) or (d)	Combination (b) and (c) or (d)	Combination of (a) and (c) or (d)		Homes for the Blind	Mental Hospitals	Public Assistance Insti- tutions			
Northern Counties Associa- tion	646	1022	1198	(139)	91	66	63	22	3108	351	317	822	226		
Southern Regional Associa- tion	1081	1545	1798	(191)	114	142	109	17	4806	695	960	1649	211		
Western Counties Associa- tion	291	306	286	(24)	57	37	42	10	1029	116	111	361	41		
Wales and Monmouthshire Regional Council ...	145	230	265	(29)	16	16	12	4	688	12	34	142	35		
Totals, 1945	2163	3103	3547	(383)	278	261	226	53	9631	1174	1422	2974	513		
Totals, 1944	2150	3179	3704	(340)	286	263	205	74	9861	1196	1438	2967	502		

* See NOTE on Sheet No. 1

SHEET No. 4

BLIND PERSONS REGISTERED AS NEW CASES (NOT TRANSFERS FROM OTHER REGISTERS) DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1945																									
REGIONAL ORGANISATION		TABLE VIII—AGE PERIODS												TABLE IX—AGE AT WHICH BLINDNESS OCCURRED											
													TOTAL												
		0-1	1-5	5-16	16-21	21-40	40-50	50-65	65-70	Over 70	UNKNOWN	0-1	1-5	5-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	Over 70	UNKNOWN			
Northern Counties Association		4	14	42	27	152	118	379	305	1081	15	2137	67	28	26	35	79	76	126	231	513	888	68		
Southern Regional Association		7	42	68	39	208	171	490	361	1676	12	3074	87	39	25	62	90	129	187	314	585	1424	132		
Western Counties Association		1	6	17	2	23	21	85	42	284	—	481	26	3	3	8	13	12	28	69	109	210	—		
Wales and Monmouthshire Regional Council ...		—	2	6	5	10	19	46	40	201	13	342	6	2	1	6	6	8	15	33	67	152	46		
Totals, 1945		12	64	133	73	393	329	1000	748	3242	40	6034	186	72	55	111	188	225	356	647	1274	2674	246		
Totals, 1944		11	70	147	70	290	333	1093	808	3242	46	6110	187	61	72	93	154	199	350	717	1358	2600	319		

MINISTRY OF HEALTH,
WHITEHALL, S.W.1.
26th February, 1946.