named Cowell was also present with the forces; both Warner and Cowell were contemplating applying for the post of surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital; while in Scotland Cowell learnt that the vacancy had been declared. Without telling Warner he obtained leave of absence on account of urgent business in London. Cowell was elected and it is said that Warner never forgave him this piece of sharp practice, and that when he met his colleagues at the Court of Assistants at Surgeons' Hall he invariably accosted them thus: "How d'ye do, gentlemen? I am glad to see you all, except Mr. Cowell" ('Wadd, Mems., Maxims, and Memoirs," 1827).

Warner was elected surgeon at Guy's shortly after this date. He died in 1801.

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**ANNOTATIONS**

**The Work of the Medical Research Council**

The Medical Research Council has recently issued its report for the year 1926-1927.* When commenting on the previous year's Report (Brit. Jl. of Ophthal., Vol. XI, p. 346, 1927) we drew attention to Lord Balfour's account of the principles on which the Board acted in the administration of the all too scanty funds at their disposal, i.e., briefly to allow the first-class brain a free hand to carry on researches as seems best, while the second class picks out the practical plums. The sum actually provided by Parliament as a grant-in-aid was only £135,000, and had this not been largely supplemented by private donations, which included a special anonymous gift of £1,500 for the installation of a new special microscope for Mr. Barnard's use at Mill Hill, and also financial assistance given to particular pieces of work by the Miners' Welfare Fund, the Dental Board of the U.K., the Empire Marketing Board, the Distemper Research Council of the Field Newspaper, and the British Empire Cancer Campaign, much of the work could not have been carried on with success. Another factor in reducing expenditure to which Lord Balfour again draws attention is the help received from the numerous scientific men who have freely given their time and knowledge to the work of the various Committees under whose detailed supervision by far the greater part of the whole programme of work is modelled and conducted. "These thanks do not become a mere figure of speech by annual repetition. It must be a truism

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to all who know the realities and reflect upon them, that without this unselfish and loyal collaboration the Council could not hope to perform adequately the tasks entrusted to them." Whether it is quite satisfactory that a great nation should depend on the charity of its best brains for this most necessary work is another question.

The ground covered by the Report is very wide, and deals with a great variety of research, but the admirable short accounts given in the text will enable the reader to follow the general trend of each piece of work. The Committee upon the Physiology of Vision is still at work on the special problems of the Fighting Services, general problems relating to vision such as glare and flicker, and the psychology of reading. Some of the work by Banister, Hartridge and Lythgoe on the latter subject was published in this journal (Brit. J. of Ophthal., Vol. XI, pp. 49, 321, 1927). Duke-Elder has also received a grant-in-aid for his work on the physiology of intra-ocular pressure, an account of which formed one of our monograph supplements. The same worker in company with J. R. Riddell has been working upon the effects on vision of industrial occupations involving the risk of eye-strain. Miss Vernon's work on summarizing the methods used in the measurement of eye movements appeared in our March number of this year.

In the introduction to the Report special attention is drawn to the successful work of the new machinery provided by the Committee of Civil Research in securing the discussion of problems affecting different parts of the United Kingdom or of the Empire, in the common light of both administrative experience and scientific knowledge.

The fresh opportunities thus provided for collaboration should be of great benefit to workers at home as well as to those in the Colonial Empire overseas.

We can assure our readers that they will not grudge the time spent in reading this most interesting Report.

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**Carl Koller and Cocaine**

In the January-February number (Vol. VII, 1928) of *Anesthesia and Analgesia* will be found some interesting reminiscences by Koller on the first use of cocaine in eye surgery. Until 1884 the only known method of obtaining local anaesthesia was the Richardson ether spray, which, acting by freezing, was used for operations of short duration, such as the opening of whitlows, etc. At this time Koller was house surgeon at the *Allgemeine Krankenhaus* in Vienna; he had done research work in embryology, and