apparent to me, while reading the text in its neighbourhood, and it distinctly evokes colour sensations of purple and yellow. Although the object is not in motion, it seems probable that the minute oscillations of the eye result in the same retinal area being alternately stimulated by a black or white sector. I cannot pretend to place on a solid scientific foundation any of these, or many other such phenomena that all will meet with in experimenting with revolving discs. My knowledge is quite inadequate to such a task. But that there is fruitful soil here I have no doubt.

As a clinician I mean to continue exploring the thresholds for clinical purposes. The question to decide, as far as our work is concerned, is: Does studying the threshold of light and colour lead to diagnostic signs, and what are they? This can be settled empirically. Quantities of tests, quantities of earnest collaborators, will reveal the scope and the limitations of this method.*

ANNOTATIONS

A Ministry of Health

Our readers have doubtless followed with interest the discussions which have recently taken place with regard to the establishment of a Ministry of Health. As ophthalmologists, and therefore somewhat wrapt up in our own special affairs, it behoves us to make active efforts to keep in touch with all movements which affect the welfare of the medical profession as a whole. The establishment of a Ministry of Health involves the solution of two great problems. Matters relating to the health of the nation are at present dealt with by a large number of Government Departments, and the first problem, preparatory in its nature, is the correlation of these sectional interests and their co-ordination under a single administration. This is the work of the departments concerned; but the success of the new Ministry will depend largely upon the obliteration of inter-departmental jealousies and the adoption of well-considered plans for the division of the administrative labours. In drawing up such plans the authorities will be well advised to consult those leading members of the profession whose experience and good judgment endow their opinions with peculiar weight on the several questions requiring consideration.

* In a case of Daltonism the palest red and green evoked colour sensations. They were called "brown," but differed from one another. They were pronounced as differing entirely from the neutral page or the grey spots, because "these are not colours and those are." Apparently his colour thresholds for red and green are normal, though he fails in the simplest test for colour blindness.
The second great problem includes the general policy to be adopted by such a Ministry and the innumerable details of reconstruction which the carrying out of that policy necessitates. The project of a Ministry of Health is being borne gaily along upon the great wave of reconstructive enthusiasm. It appeals to many as a panacea for all our discontents. Schemes of reconstruction too often give rein to revolutionary ideas, Utopian in their idealism. Unless they are held in check by the teachings of history and experience the clash of rival theories destroys concerted action and a noisy minority obtains control, with disastrous results.

Most of the discussions which have as yet taken place have given evidence of much unpractical theorisation and of divergent or even mutually destructive principles. They have been lacking in the responsibility of constructive statesmanship, which is wholesomely restrained in its architectural experiments by the necessity of making its bricks out of the materials which are available. Hence it would be wise for the medical profession to come down to earth and start seriously to work. We need not dwell upon the political failures of medicine in the not distant past, but we should not ignore the lessons which we ought to have learnt from them. The chief of these is our lack of organization for political purposes. We have many very efficient teaching establishments, qualifying bodies, and scientific societies, but for one reason or another—mostly quite sound reasons—none of them has assumed more than a merely parochial responsibility for the medical welfare of the State, a responsibility limited to its own alumni, its own localised branch of medicine, and so on.

Now, the first requirement of political organization is proper representation of sectional interests. Our own branch of medicine has recently set up a body, the Council of British Ophthalmologists, which is intended to be truly representative. Time alone will show whether this aspiration is justified, but if it is, public bodies, whether governmental or otherwise, have in this Council an authoritative source of information on all matters relating to the public welfare which involve questions of ophthalmological interest. Whether the Council would be prepared to suggest advisory representatives if requested to do so is a matter for their careful consideration, but in any case they afford a satisfactory medium of communication.

We cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that other branches of medicine might well follow the lead of the British ophthalmologists. Doubtless the constitution of representative bodies of medicine, surgery, general practitioners, and so on, would reveal difficulties which do not exist in such acute form in the representation of a speciality, but the difficulties are not insuperable. If success were attained the machinery would be set up for obtaining a real, instead of a haphazard, representation of British medicine as a whole.