

## KING EDWARD VIII HOSPITAL — THE TEACHING HOSPITAL OF THE DURBAN MEDICAL SCHOOL

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### HISTORY

In 1947, on behalf of his Cabinet, General Smuts approved, in principle, the establishment of a medical school in Durban under the aegis of the University of Natal. In 1948 the Nationalist Government came into power and, after lengthy negotiations, Dr. A. J. Stals (who was both Minister of Health and Minister of Education) announced in 1949 that the Nationalist Government Cabinet had reaffirmed the approval given, in principle, for the establishment of a Faculty of Medicine in the newly constituted University of Natal.

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE NATAL PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The development of the Durban Medical School has been made possible through the active participation of the Natal Provincial Administration. Negotiations with the Administration were initiated soon after the Treasury approval for the establishment of the Faculty was obtained in 1950. These negotiations involved the establishment of King Edward VIII Hospital as the teaching hospital of the Medical School.

The Medical School was opened in 1951, and before the clinical training of the leading group of students commenced in 1955, a memorandum of agreement was entered into between the Natal Provincial Administration and the University of Natal. In terms of this Agreement, the Natal Provincial Administration made King Edward VIII Hospital available as the teaching hospital of the Medical School. The Administration has made substantial financial contributions towards the maintenance and development of King Edward VIII Hospital and the Medical School.

The provisions of the Agreement led to the creation of a joint medical school staff establishment and all members of this staff receive their emoluments, or part of their emoluments, from the Natal Provincial Administration for their service responsibilities in the hospital.

The initial integration of the part-time members of staff of the hospital gave rise to considerable difficulty, and the Council of the University and the Administrator-in-Executive Committee of the Natal Provincial Council appointed a Committee of Enquiry 'to investigate and report upon the medical staffing conditions of the Provincial hospitals in Durban, with a view to making recommendations in regard to the policy that should be pursued in appointing personnel in the teaching hospital of the Durban Medical School.' The Committee was also empowered to report on such other matters as it considered of importance and relevant to the enquiry.

Professor G. A. Elliott was appointed Chairman of the

Committee of Enquiry, with Dr. G. G. Campbell and Dr. Jack Drummond as members. The report of the Committee was published on 26 October 1955. The Committee proposed a scheme for the pooling of part-time staff and resources by the Natal Provincial Administration and the University at the hospital. In terms of this scheme, the financial contributions made by the University through the State Department of Education for part-time staff were pooled with the existing contributions of the Natal Provincial Administration to provide for a system of staffing whereby all part-time visiting staff members became teachers at the University. This development corresponded with staffing arrangements that had been made at teaching hospitals attached to the other medical schools in South Africa.

Final arrangements regarding the appointment of part-time members of staff to the joint establishment were com-



Dr. S. Disler, the present Medical Superintendent of King Edward VIII Hospital, Durban, who is President of the Natal Coastal Branch of the Medical Association of South Africa and a Past President of the Natal Inland Branch of the Association. Dr. Disler is also a Past Vice-Chairman of the Hospital Administrators' Group of the Medical Association and he is Senior Lecturer in Medical Administration at the University of Natal.

pleted early in 1956. In this way, largely through the co-operation of the Natal Provincial Administration and the part-time specialist staff (most of whom had previously held visiting staff appointments at the hospital), it became possible to provide an integrated staffing arrangement which has ensured to the Medical School the highest possible standards in clinical training. A spirit of cooperation and mutual confidence has developed between the University of Natal and the Natal Provincial Administration, and between the full-time and part-time members of the academic staff.

At present there are 21 full-time members and 34 part-time members of the academic staff serving the University and the hospital. (These figures do not include all the premedical, preclinical and honorary members of staff.)

#### STUDENTS IN TRAINING

The first group of students qualified in November 1957. A total of 65 graduates have obtained their M.B., Ch.B. degrees at the University of Natal since November 1957. In the present year of registration (1961) there are 213 students, distributed in the various years of study as shown in Table I.

There are African, Indian, and Coloured students in the Faculty. By an arrangement entered into between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Governments of the

Central African Federation and the Protectorates, a limited number of extra-territorial Africans have been admitted to the Medical School. Through the 7 years of study, there

TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS

<i>Year</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>
Preliminary	35	6	41
First	29	2	31
Second	38	4	42
Third	27	5	32
Fourth	17	2	19
Fifth	22	1	23
Sixth	22	3	25

are in 1961 10 students from the Central African Federation, 3 students from Basutoland, and 1 student from Swaziland.

#### CONCLUSION

In spite of many difficulties, largely dependent upon the congestion in the hospital, the Durban Medical School has enjoyed several years of considerable activity in association with King Edward VIII Hospital. There have been developments in all divisions, not only in teaching, but also in research. There is no doubt that the hospital has made a most significant contribution to the development of medical services in the country.