

[c October, 1919]

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM REGARDING MR ROCKEFELLER'S GIFT TO BE DEVOTED
TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

In June last, following a conference with Mr John D Rockefeller, Jr., the officers of the General Education Board prepared for submission to Mr Rockefeller, Sr., a memorandum setting forth the present condition of medical education in the United States and pointing out the urgent need of increased resources and improved facilities. It was estimated, as appears from the memorandum which is appended hereto, that in order to place medical education in the United States country-wide on a modern basis a sum approximating \$200,000,000 is required. Of this sum taxation will certainly supply the absolute essentials and something more in a number of states west of the Mississippi; south of the Ohio, taxation will do a part. In all sections increasing sums may doubtless be expected from gift or endowment. It was suggested that the time has come when contributions conditioned upon the raising of additional sums would probably be effective in hastening developments.

Under date of September 20, 1919, Mr Rockefeller addressed a note to the General Education Board, reciting a list of securities which he gave to the General Education Board "to be used for the advancement of medical education in the United States in the discretion of your board of directors, the income to be used currently and the principal to be expended within the next fifty years." These securities are valued at \$20,601,580. The gift was accepted by the Executive Committee of the General Education Board at a meeting held September 25, 1919, when the following resolutions were passed:

"RESOLVED that the Executive Committee of the General Education Board, on behalf of the Board hereby accepts the gift from Mr John D Rockefeller of the securities as set forth in his letter of September 20, 1919, for the purposes and on the conditions therein set forth.

"RESOLVED that the President be requested to make suitable acknowledgment to Mr Rockefeller."

The officers now bring the matter to the attention of the Board in order that the entire Board may be officially informed of Mr Rockefeller's splendid contribution and in order that the policy to be pursued in the use of this fund may be made a matter of discussion. As a basis of the discussion and with no intention whatsoever of presenting a definite policy, the officers submit the following considerations:

1. There is no other educational field in which we are as clear as we are in the field of medical education with respect to what is needed and what can be and should be accomplished. Despite the fact that relatively few human ills have been completely worked out, the method and the technique by means of which successive diseases may and probably will be ultimately conquered are now clear enough to suggest the proper educational procedure to be followed in the training of physicians who can apply such knowledge as has been won and who can utilize their current experience for the increase of knowledge and skill. Modern medicine is thus a definite, logical conception. From this conception are easily derived:

- a. The educational prerequisites to the study of medicine;
- b. The facilities and resources needed for the prosecution of medical studies;
- c. The objects to be aimed at by the medical school.

We are therefore justified in saying that we know what a modern medical school should aim to be.

2. It does not follow however that in the United States we can without more ado proceed immediately to the universal realization of an ideal type of medical school. Educational, financial, and social conditions are in this country too uneven to permit that. Nor can these conditions be summarily or rapidly made uniform throughout the United States. Until they become fairly homogeneous, the same type of medical education cannot be everywhere realized. The new fund would therefore perhaps be most effectively employed for the immediate improvement, rather than the immediate standardization of medical education in the United States.

3. Should it be decided to use this fund for improvement rather than standardization, it would seem to be desirable to vary the form and object of our cooperation, according to local conditions. A school of medicine which might be as creditable and as effective as under existing circumstances it could be made in one section of the country might well be an anachronism in another section. In the East, for example, conditions are favorable to the development of the highest type of medical school. Doubtless schools somewhat inferior will continue to exist for some years, even in the East, but, inasmuch as the Board cannot possibly cover the entire field, there would seem to be no reason why its funds should be used in this section to assist anything but the very best; and even the best should be expected to draw largely upon the general financial resources of this region. In the South the situation

is quite different. Secondary schools and colleges are not as yet sufficiently far advanced to furnish a large number of medical schools with the student body required by the highest type of medical school; the amount of local financial help obtainable is limited. For some years to come therefore we shall have to be satisfied to do the best that the situation permits, while encouraging further improvement in every possible way. The establishment of the projected medical school at Nashville should provide a concrete embodiment of the modern ideal, which will be a constant source of inspiration and stimulus. Meanwhile, the existing medical schools in Virginia, Texas, Louisiana and other states, indispensable even though they fall short of the Nashville model, are susceptible of considerable improvement. The officers raise the question therefore as to whether in the South it would not be both wise and necessary to assist at the moment something other than the best.

It is not necessary in this connection to discuss in detail the West, since the foregoing considerations make sufficiently clear the general situation to be dealt with. Detailed study will have to be made once more of the various western states before specific recommendations can be made, but the officers are inclined to believe that the West is more or less composite in character, several points being analogous to the East, the rest being more or less similar to the South.

4. So much for the types of medical school in the development of which the General Education Board may cooperate. Another point however arises. In the East medical education is altogether in the hands

of privately endowed institutions of learning. With the exception of some eight or ten schools, medical education in the West and South is in the hands of state universities. The Board has found it practicable to cooperate with endowed universities in developing their medical schools. It has had thus far no experience with state or municipal institutions in this field. It is evident, however, that if Mr Rockefeller's benefaction is to be made generally effective, cooperation with state and municipal universities is necessary. Our relations with state universities in the South in the field of general education have been such as to encourage us to believe that there is no inherent difficulty in cooperation with these institutions in respect to medical education. Indeed, since the announcement of Mr Rockefeller's gift was made the Board has received numerous applications from presidents of state universities inviting cooperation. The authorities in question have been informed that the program to be followed in the use of Mr Rockefeller's recent gift has not as yet been decided.

As a starting for the present discussion the officers therefore submit the following:

1. The General Education Board does not believe it wise or practicable to confine its cooperation in the field of medical education to a single type of school, in respect to organization or facilities.
2. Its immediate object should be improvement, rather than standardization.

3. In the East, coöperation may well be limited to the most advanced type of school; in the South and West, while the Board should assist in setting up or developing advanced models, aid should be given to schools less highly developed.

4. The Board welcomes the opportunity to coöperate with state or municipal, as well as endowed, institutions.