

tery tickets to pick the £10,000 winner of the National Cancer Day Society lottery at the London Press Club. Today she will be joined by the Duke of Devonshire for the society's Ascot race meeting — "High-light of 'Fight Cancer Month'."

# Research money misspent?

By ALAN MASSAM

**A** MID the publicity bonanza for the current "Fight Cancer Month," culminating in today's £34,000 charity race at Ascot — a small quiet voice has been heard asking a relevant question.

The voice is that of Dr. F. J. C. Roe, reader in experimental pathology at the Institute of Cancer Research, and the question: Are we spending our cancer research money in the most profitable way?

Dr. Roe, who has been involved in cancer research for 16 years, believes the answer is no. And he has expressed his conviction in an article just published in newspapers of the London-based Westminster Press Group.

Dr. Roe's case is that with

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# Co-ordination is needed in cancer research

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research funds controlled by three main agencies, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, the British Empire Cancer Campaign for Research and the Medical Research Council, all pursuing their own chosen courses, no unified cancer research effort can be made.

## NICELY GEARED

Dr. Roe observes that the BECCR was set up in the 1920s and says that the link with university work which is a feature of the present cancer research organization, was "nicely geared to the situation where there were a great many obvious projects to tackle, with research workers all over the country eager to tackle them and only needing the money."

He goes on "Now the situation has changed. Most of the obvious jobs have been done. Research has become more complex and frequently requires expensive equipment, the cost of which is only justifiable if it is fully used before it becomes obsolete."

"The links between cancer research laboratories and the universities now tend to block progress. Established lines of research expand to leave no room for new approaches."

"For this reason Britain's contribution to tumour virus research has until recently lagged far behind that of the United States. Even now the largest cancer research institute in Britain lacks facilities for virus research."

Dr. Roe also offers some specific criticism of the voluntary agencies. He says that at present prevention offers better prospects than treatment—prevention measures in industry and elsewhere have already

What are Dr. Roe's proposals?

"The ideal thing would be for the Medical Research Council, the Imperial Fund and the BECCR to get together to form a "National Cancer Research Council" which would not only consider applications but would take the initiative in seeing that promising paths of research are pursued . . .

"There is no limit to the amount of co-ordination possible or even desirable: anyone responsible for distributing research funds has to take it on trust that senior research workers know what they are doing, and are pursuing useful inquiries. But a national council could aim at a greater degree of co-ordination of research than we have now."

saved thousands of lives. Despite this the scientific advisory committees of both the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and the BECCR tend to consist of people with experience in the areas of treatment and diagnosis rather than of prevention.

"Both the Imperial Fund and the BECCR may be criticized for drawing their advisers from too narrow a field. They include, for instance, no epidemiologist."

"The BECCR relies heavily on panels of busy men. Perhaps it should spend more on making sure that its annual budget, now over £1½m, is used to full advantage."

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The Duchess of Roxburghe paddles into a swimming pool filled with 750,000 2s. 6d. lottery tickets to pick the £10,000 winner of the National Cancer Day Society lottery at the London Press Club. Today she will be joined by the Duke of Devonshire for the society's Ascot race meeting — high-light of "Fight Cancer Month."

## Research money

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