

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

SYMPOSIA ORGANIZED BY THE SECTION ON MEDICAL SCIENCES (N) OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

THE development of the programs of symposia by Section N (Medical Sciences) of the American Association for the Advancement of Science began in June, 1934. In the beginning very modest programs were planned. It was felt best to gradually develop the idea of specializing our programs in certain fields of medicine until eventually the symposium would become the major part of each meeting.

Under the former system of building programs, the secretary of the section received requests from various members to present papers, and also from persons not members of the association. The subjects presented were of such a wide variety that no single person could pass upon their merits, and often only a title was submitted, without the manuscript itself or even the abstract. The secretary of Section N at that time felt that in order to have programs of high quality it would be necessary to emphasize certain subjects at each meeting and to obtain the best advice possible in selecting the persons to contribute to the subject. We have found this quite a simple plan to develop. In the first place, the secretary must be familiar with present-day problems in the field. After the subject of the symposium is chosen, an unofficial advisory group, actively engaged in research in the field, is appointed and consulted. With the advice of this committee, a group of contributors is then selected to discuss the various phases of the subject and those chosen are invited formally to present their work.

The plan outlined above has not only succeeded in a very important way in developing this forum of scientific medicine within the association, but it has increased the interest of medical men in the work of the association and has placed the meetings of Section N among the best in the country dealing with medical science.

The following series of symposia meetings of Section N have been held over the past few years:

June, 1934, Berkeley, "General Symposium on the Hormones, including Insulin."

December, 1934, Pittsburgh, "Symposium on Poliomyelitis"; "Symposium on the Chemistry and Metabolism of Sulfur Compounds."

June, 1935, Minneapolis, "Symposium on Blood Dyscrasias."

December, 1935, St. Louis, "Symposium on the Sex Hormones."

June, 1936, Rochester, "Symposium in Memory of Theobald Smith."

December, 1936, Atlantic City, "Symposium on Cancer."

June, 1937, Denver, "Symposium on Acid-Fast Bacterial Diseases—Tuberculosis, Leprosy, etc."

Up to the present time, seven of these so-called symposia meetings have been held by Section N. Gradually many refinements have been evolved, and the section now plans meetings ahead for a two-year period. At the coming meeting at Indianapolis, a very comprehensive program dealing with the general subject of syphilis is being arranged. Dr. Thomas Parran, Jr., Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, will bring this meeting to a close with an evening address on December 30. The secretary of Section N, Dr. Malcolm H. Soule, of the University of Michigan, is developing a general program for the Ottawa meeting in June, 1938, with our scientific and medical colleagues in Canada. For the December meeting in 1938 he is planning a most important symposium on mental health, and a special committee of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene is advising, with the active planning by Dr. Walter Lewis Treadway, to bring this gigantic problem before the association and the nation. Plans are already being discussed for the meeting of Section N for December, 1939, and another broad, important and nationally significant medical subject will be presented at this meeting.

Naturally the most important single factor in developing scientific programs of the high level described is the secretary of the section. Section N has been most fortunate in having as its secretary in recent years such men as Dr. Vincent du Vigneaud and, at present, Dr. Malcolm H. Soule.

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GIFTS OF LORD NUFFIELD TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

LORD NUFFIELD has offered the University of Oxford £1,000,000 (including a site valued at £100,000) for the building and endowment of a new graduate college, to be devoted to the collaboration, particularly in social studies, of theoretical students and practical men of affairs.

Two further gifts, making a total new benefaction of £1,300,000, also have been announced. These are: £100,000 for the erection and equipment of a new laboratory of physical chemistry, and £200,000 for the erection of buildings at hospitals associated with the medical research scheme endowed by Lord Nuffield last year.