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.

In making these gifts to the university, Lord Nuffield wrote:

Although I can not claim any expert knowledge of university policy, I have gathered from such observations as I have been able to make that it is not the desire of universities generally to compete with one another for preeminence in every branch of science. But felicitous appointments, opportune benefactions or other happy accidents from time to time stimulate particular developments. I understand that one branch of physical science with which the name of Oxford is particularly associated at present is physical chemistry, and I am aware of the importance of that subject in relation to other sciences which are of special concern to industrialists. Having heard of the unsatisfactory conditions in which the physical chemists in Oxford are obliged to work, I should be happy to give the university a sum sufficient for the building and equipment of an up-to-date laboratory of physical chemistry.

It is not, however, in the scientific branches alone that the universities are often unable to meet the demands of industry. In the meeting of the demands for new knowledge in the non-scientific subjects there is an even greater lag than in scientific subjects between research and its practical application. This is in some respects comparable with the separation between the clinical and the laboratory aspects of medical science which recent developments in Oxford are designed to bridge. Struck by this analogy, I have been wondering during the past year whether there is any way to bridge the separation between the theoretical students of contemporary civilization and the men responsible for carrying it on; between the economists, the political theorist, the student of government and administration on the one hand, and on the other hand the business man, the politician, the civil servant and the local government official, not to mention the ordinary every-day man and woman.

It is also announced that Lord Nuffield has made a gift of £300,000 to the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford. This is his second large donation to the infirmary, having already given £150,000. He has also placed £100,000 in the hands of trustees for the development of orthopedic surgery, and an organized service for the early discovery and the cure of crippling disabilities on a carefully considered plan in South Africa. The organization will be based on information to be gathered and collated by Professor G. R. Girdlestone, who will visit South Africa for the purpose during December and January.

GIFT FOR THE STUDY OF ARTHRITIS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

MADE possible by an endowment grant of $1,000,000 from the Horace H. Rackham and Mary A. Rackham Fund, a comprehensive study of arthritis, its prevention, cure and mitigation, will be conducted at the University of Michigan. This research project, under the terms of the gift, will be continued for at least five years, and may be continued for ten years if the Board of Governors of the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies so decides. It is in addition to the other large gifts which have come to the University of Michigan from this source; gifts which have made possible the erection of the new Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies Building, now nearing completion, and the large endowment of that school; the gift that made possible the establishment of the Institute for Human Adjustment, and other donations to this and to other institutions.

Preliminary announcement of this latest gift was made several months ago when it was stated that the sum of $10,000 would be available for the study of arthritis. At that time the research organization was tentatively set up and preliminary studies started. The original $10,000 will be merged into the amount expendible for the first year of the research.

The gift funds which endow the research have been set up by the Board of Regents as the Rackham Arthritis Research. The interest will be used annually to finance the research activities. These funds will be cumulative and any amount not used in a fiscal year will be available for the following year.

Following the arthritis study, the executive board may direct that the available funds be used for some other major research project. At any time after fifteen years, the whole sum may be added to the endowment fund of the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, where it will be used continuously for research projects and other allied activities.

Preliminary work has been going forward rapidly since the first grant of $10,000 was made. The members of the executive committee are: Dr. Cyrus C. Sturgis, professor of internal medicine, director of the Simpson Memorial Institute for Medical Research and director of the department of internal medicine in the Medical School, chairman; Dr. Harley A. Haynes, director of the University Hospital, and Dr. Carl E. Badgley, professor of surgery and head of orthopedics in the department of surgery in the Medical School. Dr. Richard H. Fryberg, assistant professor of internal medicine, has been relieved from teaching and has been appointed director of the research.

AWARD OF THE WILLIAM H. PERKIN MEDAL

DR. FRANK J. TONE, president of the Carborundum Company, Niagara Falls, N. Y., father of Franchot Tone, motion picture actor, has been awarded the William H. Perkin Medal of the American Section of the Society of Chemical Industry for 1938 for "valuable work in applied chemistry, including the development of abrasives and refractories."

The medal will be presented at a joint meeting of