

## DIE MEDIESE KONGRES

Die 42ste Mediese Kongres (M.V.S.A.) word gedurende die week 27 September–3 Oktober in Oos-Londen gehou. Voorbereidings vir hierdie Kongres is reeds 'n geruime tyd al aan die gang, en 'n ywerige en onvermoeide Kongreskomitee stel dit hom ten doel om alles so goed en doeltreffend as moontlik te reël. Met die doel om alle belangstellende lede so vroegtydig en volledig moontlik in te lig, is omvattende besonderhede aan elke lid van die Mediese Vereniging gestuur in die vorm van spesiale omsendbriewe, sowel as deur middel van aankondigings in die *Tydskrif*. Om hierdie informasie min of meer af te rond is die volledige wetenskaplike program van die Kongres in die *Tydskrif* van 25 Julie (33, 629) gepubliseer. Die Tak Grens wat as gashere vir die Kongres optree, kan dus die geregverdigde verwagting koester dat lede van die Vereniging self nou ook hul deel sal bydra om die verrigtinge van hierdie Kongres so luisterryk as moontlik te laat verloop.

Sedert die vroegste dae van sy bestaan het die Mediese Vereniging van Suid-Afrika hom dit ten doel gestel om as 'n wetenskaplike en kulturele liggaam op te tree en nie net as 'n soort vakbond vir dokters nie. Om hierdie rede het byeenkomste van individuele lede, van Afdelings, Takke, Nasionale Groepe, en die gereelde algemene Kongresse nog altyd 'n belangrike deel uitgemaak van die aktiwiteite van die Mediese Vereniging.

Daar is egter ook 'n ander rede waarom hierdie aktiwiteite van die Vereniging nog altyd as besonder belangrik beskou is, nl. die behoefte aan volgehoue nagraadse omgang tussen dokters op 'n akademiese en wetenskaplike vlak—'n behoefte wat dwarsoor die wêreld gevoel word omdat alle dokters al hoe meer onder die besef kom van die snelle en omvangryke uitbreiding van die mediese kennis. In die moderne mediese wêreld het gedurige nagraadse studie van die allergrootste belang geword vir sowel die dokter as vir sy pasiënt.

Die probleem van hoe om op die hoogte te bly van die moderne ontwikkeling kan op baie maniere opgelos word; byvoorbeeld deur te lees, deur navorsingswerk te doen, deur te reis, en deur middel van omgang met kollegas op

kongresse. Aan navorsingswerk, wat die groot gros van mediese praktisyns betref, is daar baie probleme verbonde—veral probleme van 'n ekonomiese aard en van ontoereikende nagraadse universiteitsfasiliteite. Oorsese reise is 'n luukse wat min dokters kan bekostig. Dié gaping word vir die meeste mediese praktisyns deur leeswerk gevul, en tog is leeswerk alleen nie genoeg nie. Daar bestaan nog altyd die behoefte aan die prikkeling van gedagtewisseling wat veral op kongresse moontlik is.

Dit is dus ongetwyfeld die geval dat die gereelde tweejaarlikse algemene Mediese Kongres 'n heel besondere plek inneem in die professionele lewe van dokters in ons land. By 'n volledige waardebeoordeling van die betekenis van kongresse soos hierdie, in die besonder, en van die waarde van professionele en maatskaplike omgang met ander lede van die Mediese Vereniging, in die algemeen, is dit egter nodig dat ons verder en dieper moet kyk. Ons moet ook aan onself die vraag stel of ons as doktersgemeenskap ons regmatige plek inneem in die mediese rade en vergaderinge en organisasies van die wêreld. Omdat ons as mediese liggaam in die Mediese Vereniging gelukkig nog vry staan van interne spanninge en wrywing en tweespalt, soos wat daar ongelukkig op so baie ander gebiede van die gemeenskapslewe bestaan, rus daar op ons die verpligting om die tradisionele broederskap in die geneeskunde soos 'n kosbare kleinood te bewaar. Dit is ons plig om ons eie, besondere professionele en intellektuele tradisie op te bou in hierdie land, maar terselfdertyd moet ons ten alle koste voorkom dat ons geïsoleer en op ons eie hier voortgaan sonder om ons gedurig te gaan drenk aan die groot wêreldwye stroom van mediese kennis en gebeure. Ons moet ons professionele vereniging deur sy lede en liggame so volledig moontlik inskakel by die aktiwiteite van ander nasionale mediese verenigings en van die Wêreld Mediese Vereniging. Want dan sal ons ons stem kan laat hoor buite die grense van ons eie wyk en sal ons ook die volste moontlike voordeel put uit die grootste gemeenskaplike bron van kennis en ervaring, sowel vir onself as vir die pasiënte wat aan ons sorg toevertrou is.

## THE MEDICAL CONGRESS

The 42nd Medical Congress of the Medical Association of South Africa will be held in East London from 27 September to 3 October. The Congress represents the continuation of an old and proud tradition, and it is sincerely hoped that this Congress will be as successful as previous Congresses. Full details regarding the arrangements for the Congress have been made available to members of the Association by means of special circular letters distributed by the Organizing Committee and by the publication of announcements in the *Journal*, and, in order to acquaint members in advance of the proceedings at Congress, the complete scien-

tific programme was published in the *Journal* of 25 July (33, 629). The Border Branch, who will act as hosts to the Congress, are continuing their work of preparation in the reasonable expectation that members of the Association will add their share in an attempt to ensure the successful culmination of this important event.

Since the early days of its existence it has been the explicit aim of the Medical Association not to be merely a trade union for doctors, but to function as a scientific and cultural body of professional men who are fully aware of the great and important obligation which rests on them—to remain

abreast of the times in professional and scientific, as well as in cultural matters. Consequently, meetings of individual members, Divisions, Branches, Groups, and the organization of general Congresses at regular intervals have always constituted an important part of the activities of the Association.

There is, however, yet another reason why the scientific and academic activities of the Association have always been regarded as eminently important—the need for sustained postgraduate contact between doctors on an academic and scientific level. This need is felt by doctors throughout the world, since all doctors are becoming increasingly aware of the rapid and extensive development of medical knowledge and of the significance of this development.

The problem of keeping in touch with modern advances can be solved in various ways: by reading, by doing research work, by travelling, and by communication with colleagues at congresses. Research work in South Africa should be encouraged at all costs, but it presents many difficulties of which the economic problem and the relative isolation of doctors and communities in this country with its vast expanses are probably the most important. Overseas travel is a luxury that many cannot afford. Reading fills this need for most medical men, and yet reading alone is not

sufficient. The stimulus gained from the exchange of views is essential.

There can, therefore, be no doubt that the importance of the regular biennial general Medical Congresses remains beyond question. However, in assessing the true significance of a Congress of this nature and of social and intellectual intercourse between doctors in general, we should ask ourselves whether we, as a community of doctors in this country, are occupying our rightful and proper position in the medical organizations and associations of the world.

As an Association we have so far been fortunate in having been able to escape the discord and tensions that have become so prominent in other walks of public life. It is our duty, therefore, to treasure the traditional fraternity of medical men. We must build up our own intellectual and professional traditions in this country, but at the same time, we must not become isolated from the great international stream of medical thought. Only by cooperating fully with other national medical associations and with the World Medical Association, shall we be able to derive the greatest benefit from the greatest common source of knowledge and experience. It is in our own interest and in the interest of the patients we serve to direct our energies towards the attainment of this goal.