

ASSOCIATION OF NEUROLOGISTS, PSYCHIATRISTS AND NEUROSURGEONS (M.A.S.A.): PRESIDENT'S REPORT*

B. CROWHURST ARCHER, M.D., *President*

I should like, first, to offer our congratulations to Dr. B. P. Pienaar on his appointment as Commissioner for Mental Hygiene for the Union of South Africa and to thank him personally for all the support he has given us throughout the year, both as Commissioner, and as a member of the South African Medical and Dental Council.

I should also like to congratulate Prof. A. M. Lamont on his appointment as Deputy Commissioner for Mental Hygiene and as Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pretoria.

To Prof. L. A. Hurst, our congratulations and best wishes on his appointment as the first full-time Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Witwatersrand. We are confident that this appointment will do much to facilitate the integration of psychiatry into the teaching of general medicine, and pave the way to similar appointments in our medical schools throughout the Union.

It has been my pleasant task to announce officially that our Vice-president, Dr. Morris Ginsburg, Physician-Superintendent, Sterkfontein Hospital, Krugersdorp was elected the first Travelling

Fellow in Psychiatric Medicine of the College of Physicians, Surgeons and Gynaecologists of South Africa and, on your behalf, I wish him every success on his important mission to Europe and America.

I should also like to thank Dr. A. P. Blignault for his great help to us in the literary field and to congratulate him on his appointment as Editor of the *South African Medical Journal*.

Mental Health Service

The theme adopted by the World Health Organization for the year 1959 was 'Mental Illness and Mental Health in the World Today'. It is therefore fitting that I should review briefly what our Group has done in the past year to lay the foundations of a mental health service, which is so urgently required to meet the ever increasing problem of mental illness in this country.

The first essential in any mental health service is, not only to provide good guidance, diagnosis and treatment, but also to offer good teaching and training facilities for medical practitioners, nurses and auxiliary workers. For this reason we welcome the

appointment of the first full-time Professor of Psychiatry to the University of Witwatersrand, which may not altogether be unconnected with the visit of our honoured guest last year, Prof. H. C. Rümke of the Department of Psychiatry, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Your Committee has been greatly encouraged in its educational programme by the President and Council of the College of Physicians, Surgeons and Gynaecologists of South Africa. For, not only was the Faculty of Neurology and Psychiatry the first to be formed within the College, but the Fellowship in Medicine, with either neurology or psychiatry as an additional special subject, has been accepted as a higher qualification by the South African Medical and Dental Council. In addition a Diploma in Psychiatric Medicine, a Travelling Fellowship and a Scholarship in Psychiatry have been established.

Public Relations

The number of articles and editorials in our medical journals dealing with various aspects of mental illness and the need for a mental health service in South Africa, has increased. Reprints of some of the more important articles have been sent to members of the Department of Health, the South African Medical and Dental Council, the Executive of the Federal Council of the Medical Association, and Members of Parliament, as well as to interested bodies overseas. Informed articles on mental health, including editorials, have also appeared in the lay press, and talks on this subject have been broadcast from time to time in both official languages by the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

Further, following the resolutions passed at our last Annual General Meeting, held in Durban in September 1958, the South African Medical and Dental Council has referred the subject of 'better integration of psychiatry into the undergraduate medical curriculum' to their Education Committee for report, and the request for a 'Commission of Enquiry into the present mental health facilities and the future needs of this country' has been referred to the Minister, through the Secretary of Health.

Finally, Government and Opposition members of both Houses of Parliament were kept informed of the mental health needs of the community during the recent health debate.

Administrative Psychiatry

In view of the increasing importance of administrative psychiatry, it was decided to invite the following distinguished members of our profession, who have always been more than interested in psychiatry, to become Honorary Members of our Group:

- (1) Prof. G. A. Elliott, *O.B.E.* President of the College of Physicians, Surgeons and Gynaecologists of South Africa.
- (2) Dr. B. A. Dormer, Chief Adviser on Tuberculosis to the Union Government.
- (3) Dr. J. J. du Pré le Roux, Secretary for Health and Chief and Health Officer of the Union of South Africa.

I am happy to say that all these distinguished gentlemen graciously accepted their appointments.

International Relations

Since the inauguration of the College of Physicians, Surgeons and Gynaecologists of South Africa and the Congress and Scientific Meeting of the Medical Association of South Africa, held in Durban in 1957, overseas authorities and organizations have shown increasing interest in medical developments in this country.

During the past year your Committee has been invited to send reports on the psychiatric services in this country to the Secretary-General of the World Health Organization and to the Director of the American Psychiatric Association with a view to their assisting us with our problems. We have also received enquiries on various aspects of psychiatric practice and requests for literature from medical schools as far apart as São Paulo and Prague and San Francisco and Bangkok. We were also invited to collaborate with Prof. Lawrence C. Kolb, Director of the Department of

Psychiatry, Columbia University, New York, in the preparation of the article on psychiatry which will be published in the 18th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Further we were able to comply with the request of Dr. Lothar B. Kalinowsky, Chairman of the Committee of International Relations of the American Psychiatric Association, to provide him with the information he required about South Africa for compilation of the International Roster of Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Neurosurgeons of all the countries of the world.

For these reasons it seemed clear to your Committee that our Group had reached a stage in its development where it should now be prepared to play its part in the international field. It seemed to us that the best way to achieve this end would be for our Association to seek affiliation with the 3 International Organizations corresponding to the 3 major interests of our Group, i.e. the World Federation of Neurologists, the World Federation for Mental Health, and the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies. This recommendation is one of major policy and would involve our Group in an increase in the annual subscription. It is therefore beyond the competence of the Executive Committee and a proper subject for discussion and action by an Annual General Meeting. This important matter has therefore been placed on the agenda.

Correspondence

The Hon. Secretary has dealt with a considerable volume of general correspondence during the year. A large part of this has been concerned with implementing the resolutions adopted at our last Annual General Meeting which was held in Durban during September 1958, and with the revision of professional fees relating to contract practice and medical aid societies. Recently your Committee has drawn up an increased scale of professional fees with provision for the introduction of the decimal system. This new scale was forwarded with a supporting memorandum to the Central Committee for Contract Practice, and arrangements have been made for our Group to be represented at their discussions.

It is clear that the introduction of some form of national health insurance is necessary to meet the needs of the 'middle income group'; but the draft constitution of the Medical Services Plan for the Southern Transvaal contained a restrictive clause excluding modern psychiatric services. This would mean that over 50% of common illness would not be legally covered by the scheme. Your Committee therefore telegraphed a resolution to the Secretary of the Medical Association, deploring the fact that this scheme excludes modern psychiatric treatment and requested that the protection and sponsorship of the Medical Association should be immediately withdrawn from the scheme until such time as this apparent anachronism has been rectified.

Medical Directory

I am pleased to report that the printing of the first Medical Directory of South Africa has been completed and, due largely to the efforts of your Committee, it will be issued early next month.

CONCLUSION

It now only remains for me to thank you for your loyal support during the last two years which has made an onerous duty, if not a light one, a very pleasant one.

May I, in conclusion, express my appreciation of all the help we have received from the headquarters staff of the Medical Association and here I should like to add a very personal 'thank you' to Dr. A. H. Tonkin, Secretary of the Medical Association.

To Dr. R. W. S. Cheetham, our Hon. Secretary, who no doubt has found me a hard task master, I am deeply grateful for his loyal support and frank criticism. To our Vice-president, Dr. Morris Ginsburg—of whom we are all justly proud—my thanks for his wise counsel; and may we wish him every success when he becomes our first ambassador-at-large next year.

* Address delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the Group held in East London, September 1959.