

## FEDERAL COUNCIL MEETING

The following is a brief resumé of *some* of the matters discussed at the 6-monthly meeting of the Federal Council of the Medical Association of South Africa, held at Medical House, Esselen Street, Johannesburg, on 8-10 April 1959. The Minutes of this meeting will be published in a later issue of the *Journal* in compliance with Rule 37 of the Standing Orders and Rules of Council. The Chairman of Federal Council (Dr. J. H. Struthers), presided. Among those present were the President of the Association (Dr. R. Schaffer), the past-President (Dr. H. Grant-Whyte), the Honorary Treasurer (Mr. J. D. Joubert) and the Vice-Chairman (Dr. E. W. Turton), who took the chair during part of the meeting.

### FINANCIAL MATTERS

The financial report of the Honorary Treasurer was tabled. Owing to the fact that the auditors were late in preparing the Balance Sheet, it had not been possible to circulate the report to members before the meeting. Members could, therefore, not study the report in advance, and it was moved by Dr. M. Shapiro, and agreed by Council, to defer discussion of the report until the next meeting of Council.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The following were among the matters dealt with in the report of the Executive Committee:

*Appointment of Editor.* The post of Editor of the Journals of the Medical Association was advertised in the medical and lay press and, at its meeting held on 3 November 1958, the Head Office and Journal Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the Executive Committee that Dr. A. P. Blignault be appointed to the post of Editor as from 1 January 1959. This recommendation was submitted to members of the Executive Committee by correspondence, and the Executive Committee also unanimously agreed that Dr. Blignault be appointed. Federal Council confirmed this action.

*Assistant Editor.* After the assumption of duty as Editor by Dr. Blignault on 1 January 1959, the Head Office and Journal Committee appointed Dr. T. Shadick Higgins to the post of Assistant Editor in a temporary capacity to assist Dr. Blignault. Federal Council resolved that the post of temporary full-time Assistant Editor be advertised.

*Transfer of Head Office.* After a long and full discussion of the factual statement (prepared by the Secretary) on the financial implications involved in a transfer of the Head Office of the Association from Cape Town to Pretoria, the following motion, proposed by Dr. R. Schaffer and seconded by Dr. Turton, was carried: 'That in view of present circumstances the transfer of the Head Office to Pretoria be not considered at present.'

*Sliding scale of subscriptions.* The Special Committee appointed by Federal Council for the purpose of investigating the desirability and practicability of instituting a sliding scale of subscriptions to the Association recommended that the subscriptions of interns and practitioners in the first 2 years of post-intern practice (hospital or private) be fixed at £2 2s. 0d. and that all other members pay a minimum subscription of £4 4s. 0d. Federal Council agreed to accept these recommendations with the following exceptions: where both husband and wife are members, one will pay £4 4s. 0d. and the other £2 2s. 0d. and retired practitioners over the age of 65 will pay £2 2s. 0d. It was felt that in view of the recent increase in salary scales, full-time medical officers should not put forward special claims to a reduction of fees, since their emoluments were now more than some men earned in private practice. Federal Council expressed the hope that all full-time

medical officers would cooperate fully in this matter—in their own interests and the interests of the Association. A further statement on this matter will be published in the *Journal* shortly.

*Transfer of contract practice work to Pretoria.* At its last meeting Federal Council resolved: 'That the Executive Committee be instructed to consider immediately ways and means of transferring the contract practice work to Pretoria as soon as possible.' This problem was again discussed and in the end Federal Council agreed that this matter be left in the hands of the Executive Committee.

*Rules for Groups and their congresses.* The Executive Committee recommended, and Federal Council agreed, that the congress rules should be amended for clarity, by the addition of the following rule: 'Congresses organized by a Group within the Association must conform to the rules for the general biennial congress of the Association.'

*Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association and British Commonwealth Medical Conference.* At the meeting of the Executive Committee held in February, the Secretary reported that this Conference of Secretaries of Commonwealth Medical Associations which was to have taken place in 1957, was postponed to July 1959. At the time that the appointment of a representative had been considered for the 1957 Conference, the Federal Council had appointed him to be the Association's representative. He also gave details of the Conference and stated that the Association's share of the expenses would be approximately £325. After a discussion of this matter it was proposed by Dr. M. Shapiro and resolved by Federal Council 'That in view of the present state of the Association's finances the Association shall not send the Secretary to the Conference'. It was agreed that Dr. R. Schaffer, who intended to be in London at that time, be requested to represent the Association this year at the Conference.

*Resolutions submitted by the Group of Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Neuro-surgeons.* A series of 7 resolutions, passed by the Group at its Annual General Meeting held in Durban in September 1958, was considered and it was noted that the first 3 resolutions had been referred to the Secretary for Health. These resolutions deal with legislation governing control of habit-forming drugs, a commission of enquiry into mental health facilities, and special legislation to deal with psychopathic personalities. It was further noted that the last 4 resolutions had been referred to the Central Committee for Contract Practice. These resolutions deal with additional charges during a course of electro-convulsive therapy, the fee for psychotherapeutic sessions, the administration of anaesthetics by general practitioners and psychiatrists for electro-convulsive therapy, and a medical aid scheme for medical practitioners and their families.

*Badges of Office.* A request from the Group of Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Neuro-surgeons to the effect 'that the presidents of national groups should have badges of office' was considered but Federal Council agreed to take no action in this matter.

### AUGMENTED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, TRANSVAAL

*Partnerships in relation to hospital appointments.* After having considered letters received from the Honorary Secretary of the Southern Transvaal Branch and after a discussion, the Committee resolved to recommend to Federal Council that there be no change in the policy of the Association regarding this matter. Federal Council discussed the matter and various views were expressed. At the end of the discussion the following motion, proposed by Dr. S. Heymann, was carried: 'Federal Council, having reviewed the matter of partnerships in relation to hospital appointments, places on record as a statement of policy in this

regard that medical appointments on hospital staffs be made primarily and essentially on merit.'

#### HEAD OFFICE AND JOURNAL COMMITTEE

The Committee reported that 5 ordinary and 2 special meetings had been held since the last meeting of Federal Council. Among the matters dealt with by the Committee, were the appointment of the Editor and the Assistant Editor (already mentioned in the report of the Executive Committee).

*South African Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine.* An attempt was made to obtain additional advertising in order to make the South African Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine available to all members of the Medical Association. Although the reaction from certain advertisers was very encouraging, sufficient support was not forthcoming and the plan had to be dropped for the moment. Further attempts will be made to achieve the desired object.

*Office mechanization.* After the meeting of Federal Council in September 1958, the Head Office and Journal Committee appointed a Sub-committee to investigate the question of mechanization at Head Office and to ascertain what saving this would effect. The Sub-committee reported to Federal Council that the investigation had been concluded and the Committee put forward a number of proposals. The Committee was satisfied that no major changes were necessary, that no expensive machines were required, but that a definite saving could be effected by departmental reorganization. The report of the Sub-committee, which was supported by full memoranda from the official auditors of the Association and from an independent firm of chartered accountants, was noted by Federal Council.

#### BENEVOLENT FUND

It was noted that the accumulated funds of the Benevolent Fund at present amounted to over £47,000. The Federal Council decided to place on record its appreciation of the following donations to the Fund: £2,500 by the Southern Transvaal Branch, £530 by the Natal Coastal Branch, £100 by Prof. L. J. te Groen, and £59 from the Association of Physicians of South Africa. The Council also noted with appreciation the receipt of legacies from the estates of the late Dr. R. H. Welsh and the late Dr. A. E. Pinniger. During 1958 grants totalling £3,746 were paid to beneficiaries.

*Memorial fund.* The suggestion made by Dr. J. Abelsohn of Cape Town in a letter to the *Journal* of 21 February 1959, that a central memorial fund be established in memory of distinguished members of the Association, was discussed by Federal Council and tentative views were expressed that it might be possible for the J. S. du Toit Memorial Fund to be augmented in this way by linking it with the names of other 'elder bretheren'. It was decided to refer the matter back to the Management Committee of the Benevolent Fund with the request to formulate definite proposals in this respect.

#### PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

The following are some of the matters that have been dealt with by the Parliamentary Committee since the last meeting of Council: Pensions of self-employed persons, proposed amendment of section 12 of the Motor Vehicles Act, benefit societies formed under industrial agreements, anomalies re salary scales in the Health Department, the desirability of the continued maintenance of specialist registers by the South African Medical and Dental Council. The discussions and resolutions taken by Federal Council on these matters will be fully reflected in the minutes shortly to be published in the *Journal*. At the end of the discussions Dr. H. Grant-Whyte paid tribute to the magnificent work done by the Parliamentary Committee.

#### ETHICAL MATTERS

*Interviews to the press.* The Chairman of the Federal Ethical Committee in his report to Federal Council on the work done by his Committee stated that his Committee was greatly concerned by the tendency for medical practitioners to grant interviews to the press regarding special types of treatment. In these interviews the names of the doctors are not mentioned, but the

doctors can always be identified. It was felt that granting interviews of this nature constitutes unjustifiable indirect advertising. Certain definite instances will be investigated by the Committee.

*Ethical Rule 21 (3) (Consulting rooms).* The Registrar of the South African Medical and Dental Council, in a letter to the Secretary of the Medical Association, stated that his Council has been giving consideration to the desirability or otherwise of deleting or amending Ethical Rule 21 (3). This Rule reads as follows:

(1) Having consulting rooms for private practice with the entrance through, or with the name plate at the entrance to, a chemist's shop.

(2) Sharing consulting or waiting rooms with persons not on the medical or dental registers.

(3) Using in connection with his consulting rooms the term hospital, clinic or any other similar name, which might lead the public to believe that the consulting rooms are part of a hospital, clinic, nursing home or other similar institution or have features differing from those of ordinary consulting rooms.

(Note: The use on name-plates, note paper or elsewhere of a designation such as Dr. X ..... clinic or hospital, is therefore not permissible.)

This matter was fully discussed and various views were expressed. It was felt that the facilities available in hospitals or clinics are often an advantage to doctors and patients but that it should be insisted that the consulting rooms of doctors in such hospitals or clinics should in no way be associated with a hospital or clinic. Federal Council resolved to inform the Registrar of the South African Medical and Dental Council that it is in favour of the retention of Rule 21 (3) in its present form.

#### CONTRACT PRACTICE

The following are some of the matters that have been dealt with by the Central Committee for Contract Practice:

*Medical Aid Societies.* A complete list of the approved medical aid societies, including the newly approved societies, is published on page 383 of this *Journal*.

*Income ceiling of £2,500.* Federal Council agreed that the matter of the admission to medical aid societies of a new member earning more than £2,500 be discussed with representatives of the medical aid societies at a joint meeting.

*Medical insurance schemes.* After a discussion of this matter, Federal Council resolved 'That this Federal Council welcomes all forms of insurance against illness and that, therefore, Federal Council appoints a special committee on insurance for the purpose of establishing permanent contact with all insurance companies in respect of all their activities. The name shall be the Federal Council Insurance Committee'.

After presenting his report, Dr. L. O. Vercueil informed the Council that owing to unavoidable circumstances he would be forced to resign from the Chairmanship of the Central Committee for Contract Practice and the Workmen's Compensation Act Committee. Federal Council accepted his resignation with regret and expressed its sincere appreciation for the invaluable services Dr. Vercueil had rendered to the Association.

#### HONOURS

Federal Council decided to award its gold medal for distinguished service to Dr. T. Shadick Higgins. It was further decided to award the Bronze Medal for meritorious service to Drs. Lewis S. Robertson, Seymour Heymann, P. F. H. Wagner and J. N. W. Loubser.

#### MEDALS

Federal Council noted that the Head Office and Journal Committee had agreed unanimously that the following medals for 1958 be awarded:

*The Hamilton-Maynard Memorial Medal* for 1958 to Dr. David Ordman of Johannesburg for his paper entitled 'Allergy in childhood: Its pattern, control and significance in adult prophylaxis', which had appeared in the *Journal* of 5 April 1958 on page 377, and *The Leipoldt Memorial Medal* for 1958 to Dr. G. F. C. Troskie for his paper entitled 'Kistuse pneumatose van die peritoneum', which had appeared in the *Journal* of 15 February 1958 on page 193.