

## SOME THOUGHTS ON THE FOURTH CONGRESS OF THE UROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (M.A.S.A.)

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This issue of the *South African Medical Journal* contains a number of papers that were read at the recent urological congress held from 19 to 23 November 1962; as President of that congress I am much honoured to have been asked to set down some of my thoughts and observations about the running of the congress.

Until a few years ago there were no special group congresses in South Africa — during the biennial South African Medical Congresses there were, and still are, opportunities for the various groups to hold sectional meetings, with all members of the congress as a whole being free to attend. However, there are so many divergent interests at these full congresses that justice cannot be done to any one speciality, and a few years ago a number of groups, including the urologists, decided to hold their own small congresses in the years between the national congresses.

The 1962 urological congress in Cape Town was the fourth one held by this group, the first being in Port Elizabeth, the second in Cape Town and the third in Johannesburg. These earlier meetings were all of an extremely high standard, the one held in Johannesburg in 1960 being particularly noteworthy, with visiting urologists from Britain, France and Spain in addition to our own members. The social programme was magnificent, and the delegates and their wives were entertained in the most lavish way.

The Cape Town urologists realized that they would be faced with a difficult task in trying to live up to the high standard of previous congresses. In describing how we set about organizing this congress, I hope my reflections will be of assistance in guiding members of all groups whose task it will be to organize similar meetings in the future.

### *Preliminary Work*

The committee was elected two years ago, at the third congress, so that they would have plenty of time to make all necessary arrangements. The first essential was to have a good secretary, and here we were most fortunate, because Mr. P. J. M. Retief enjoyed organizing the congress and worked really hard to make it the success we believe it was. Secondly, it was important to be sure that all the members of the committee were prepared to do everything required of them to bring matters to a satisfactory conclusion, and I believe this was the case here.

We began to hold meetings regularly a year before the congress took place. These meetings were held in the evenings in the homes of the various committee members, and our committee of six functioned perfectly. Everyone made useful suggestions and everyone did his share of the work.

Through the good offices of Prof. L. N. Pyrah, we learnt that a number of British urologists were keen to attend our congress. At first we intended to ask the British Association of Urological Surgeons (BAUS) to hold their annual meeting in this country to coincide with our congress, but for various reasons we decided to limit the number of invitations, and to ask only the members of the British Urological Club, with some 15 members (one from each university centre), to attend.

Official invitations were therefore sent to the individual members of this club, to individual members of the Urological Association of South Africa, and to urologists in the Rhodesias (they are affiliated members of our association).

The financial side of our association is looked after by fairly high annual subscriptions and an even higher fee for attending the congresses. Our aim is to be able to run the individual congresses without loss, and to set aside a fund that will be used to pay the fares of prominent overseas urologists who cannot afford to bring themselves out to this country. Another financial aid is the money received from the pharmaceutical firms who were invited to exhibit at the congress. The fees they pay for their stands go towards the

running of the congress itself.

All the urologists who indicated that they wanted to attend were invited to present papers. They were asked to submit titles and synopses of their papers about three months before the opening of the congress.

### *The Congress Week*

The University of Cape Town authorities kindly allowed us the use of the Physiology Lecture Theatre for our meetings and for the pharmaceutical exhibits. There was ample room for our ladies to serve delicious teas at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., and cold lunches were available close by in the medical students' refectory, so that there was no time wasted in going out for lunch. Excellent table wines were supplied for the lunches by Mr. J. N. de Klerk, and we all sat round one long table, which made these lunch breaks very pleasant and informal affairs.

The wives of the Cape Town urologists formed a social committee, and drew up the programme of social events, as well as organizing and preparing the delicious teas I have already mentioned. Some of the activities they arranged were: trips up the cableway to the top of Table Mountain, tours round the Peninsula and to Stellenbosch, Paarl and Tulbagh, trips to various wine farms, and lunches at Kirstenbosch and at Lanzerac in Stellenbosch. We are most grateful to them for all they did and for the part they played in making the congress a success.

### *Our Guests*

The 11 urologists and their wives who visited us from overseas paid their fares to this country and back. Before they arrived we asked them by letter to indicate what other parts of South Africa they would like to visit. With this knowledge, we got in touch with urologists in other centres and asked them to make the arrangements, and we are most grateful to them for organizing transport and free accommodation for our guests throughout South Africa. One urologist in Port Elizabeth lent his car to some visiting urologists and their wives so that they could have the pleasure of driving through the Garden Route to Cape Town. While the visitors were here in Cape Town, we either gave them accommodation in our homes or paid their expenses in various hotels.

### *Social Activities*

On the Sunday evening before the congress opened we all gathered in the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Watson — this informal gathering was an excellent idea, for it enabled people to get to know one another, and last-minute plans could be made for the real business of the congress. This started the next morning at 9 a.m., when the Principal of the University of Cape Town, Dr. J. P. Duminy, welcomed the visitors and officially opened the congress.

On the Monday evening, we had a very grand get-together at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Duminy, while on the Tuesday evening there was the only evening academic meeting, when Prof. Jannie Louw addressed us on adrenal surgery. This was a masterly lecture and was greatly enjoyed by everyone present.

The Wednesday afternoon and evening were free, allowing the local urologists to catch up a little on their own work. During the evening some of the delegates were entertained by the makers of Twee Jongezellen wines at Tulbagh; others spent a delightful evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. S. Scher.

On the Thursday evening we held our official banquet at the Club Here Sewentien. The Club provided a magnificent meal with excellent wines, and everyone found the evening most enjoyable.

### *Business and Academic*

After our visitors had departed, we held our business meeting on the Friday afternoon, and decided on the venue

for the next biennial congress in 1964 (Pretoria), and also elected the President and committee for that congress. There is therefore plenty of time for them to get their arrangements under way, and we are all looking forward eagerly to the Pretoria meeting.

During the scientific sessions we were fortunate to have the services of Prof. Jannie Louw's photographer and projectionist, Mr. G. McManus. He was in attendance at all times, and, as Sir Eric Riches pointed out when making a speech of thanks on behalf of the visitors at the end of the congress sessions, he never did a thing wrong. On the one occasion when a slide was put in the wrong way up it was not his fault, but the fault of the lecturer, who had arranged the pack incorrectly.

I must congratulate all those who read papers, local urologists and visitors alike. Every paper was worth listening to and had something new and instructive to say; all were stimulating and interesting.

One last piece of advice to the organizers of future congresses: See to it that your meetings start promptly! Allow

reasonable time for the reading of each paper and do not allow this time to be exceeded; the same applies to the time set aside for discussion. For our 30-minute papers the discussion was limited to 15 minutes, and for our 20-minute papers 10 minutes were allowed for discussion. It is a good idea to have a large bell available and to call everyone in to the meeting two or three minutes before the start.

There is one improvement that we could have made, and that is to have had someone on permanent telephone duty so that local urologists, who were wanted frequently, could have been called promptly to the telephone.

### *Conclusion*

I hope this survey of our proceedings is a useful guide to organizers of future congresses. I certainly enjoyed our congress—I learnt a tremendous lot, we all made many new friends, we exchanged views, and we all benefited greatly. I look upon my Presidency for this year as an experience to be treasured for the rest of my life.