AUSTRALIAN RHEUMATISM COUNCIL

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1954-1955

Office Bearers

President: His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester.

Executive Committee.—The following were appointed at the inaugural meeting of the Council, the last Annual Meeting, or subsequently, according to the rules:

Vice-Presidents: President of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Dr. C. G. McDonald
               President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Dr. I. B. Jose (successor to Sir Harold Dew)

Chairman: Dr. S. A. Smith

Trustees: Mr. M. C. Alder
          Mr. Vincent Fairfax
          Mr. Alick Osborne

Hon. Secretary: Mr. M. C. Buttfield

Other Members: Mr. M. C. Alder
               Dr. C. R. B. Blackburn (nominee of Scientific Advisory Committee)
               Mr. Justice Herron
               Mr. E. J. Hazell
               Mr. F. P. McRae
               Dr. A. P. Murphy

Medical Director: Dr. Selwyn Nelson (also Medical Secretary)

Hon. Auditors: Messrs. McGrath, Nissen, and Jacombs.

Scientific Advisory Committee: The Executive Committee appointed the undermentioned:

President of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Dr. C. G. McDonald (Sydney)
President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Dr. I. B. Jose (Adelaide)
Dr. Mervyn Archdall (Sydney)
Dr. Hugh C. Barry (Sydney)
Dr. G. Bell (Sydney)
Dr. C. R. B. Blackburn (Sydney)
Dr. Robert Bye (Sydney)
Dr. P. A. Earnshaw (Brisbane)
Dr. Cyril Fortune (Perth)
Dr. John L. Grove (Launceston)
Sir Alexander Murphy (Brisbane)
Dr. A. Holmes a’Court (Sydney)
Dr. H. Lancaster (Sydney)
Dr. A. W. Morrow (Sydney)
Dr. Selwyn Nelson (Medical Secretary) (Sydney)
Dr. L. J. Parr (Sydney)
Dr. Ralph Reader (Sydney)
Dr. C. B. Sangster (Adelaide)
Dr. S. A. Smith (Chairman) (Sydney)
Dr. R. Strang (Melbourne)
Dr. C. J. Walters (Sydney)
Dr. R. Wishaw (Hobart).

Finance Committee.—This consists of five members as follows:

Mr. M. C. Alder (Chairman)
Mr. Vincent Fairfax
Mr. Justice Herron
Mr. F. P. McRae
Mr. Alick Osborne.

Obituary

The death of Sir Archibald Collins, of Sydney, occurred on June 24, 1955. Sir Archibald was a Foundation Member of the Council and a member of the Executive Committee and Scientific Advisory Committee since their inception. He was a fine organizer and he had looked forward to devoting a good deal of his time to the affairs of the Council. He will be greatly missed. The Chairman has conveyed the condolences of the Council to Lady Collins.

Advice was received of the death, on August 12, 1955, of Lord Horder, who had taken a major part in forming the Empire Rheumatism Council and had been its chairman until last year. The passing of Lord Horder is a loss not only to the Empire Rheumatism Council, to which the sympathy of this Council has been extended, but also to all affiliated and associated bodies.

Activities of Committees

Executive Committee.—During the year, Dr. I. B. Jose succeeded Sir Harold Dew as President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. Dr. Jose has kindly accepted the offices of Vice-President of the Council and member of the Scientific Advisory Committee. Sir Harold Dew was invited to retain his membership of the council but, due to his pending retirement, he is reducing his commitments to a minimum. His plans for the future are also indefinite. He therefore tendered his resignation as a member of the council, which the committee accepted with regret but with understanding. The resignation of Dr. T. E. Lowe, of Melbourne, from
the Scientific Advisory Committee was referred to that committee and accepted. Dr. Lowe has also been asked to retain his membership of the council. The appointment of a successor to Dr. G. M. Watson as this council's representative on the Empire Rheumatism Council's Commonwealth Sub-Committee. The Ninth International Congress on Rheumatic Diseases will be held at Toronto, Ontario, Canada, from June 23 to 28, 1957, under the auspices of the Canadian Rheumatism Association.

At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Council held in September, the rules were amended to bring the scope of the Council's activities, for taxation purposes, within the ambit of a Public Benevolent Institution; to provide for the additional office of Medical Director; to extend its powers regarding establishment of divisions; and to conform with requirements of the New South Wales Charitable Collections Act. At the same meeting a New South Wales Division was established and rules for that division were adopted. These rules were approved, also, as model rules for other divisions, when formed. It is proposed to establish further divisions when practicable.

Scientific Advisory Committee.—The educational policy of the council has been continued by inclusion of special lectures on the rheumatic diseases in post-graduate courses and to medical undergraduates. One meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee was held during the year. The business included a discussion of the activities of the council with special regard to the formation of divisions in the various states. The Victorian, South Australian, Tasmanian, Western Australian, and Queensland representatives of the Scientific Advisory Committee undertook to take an active part in enlisting the aid of their colleagues in their respective states with the object of forming divisions. At the suggestion of Dr. Cyril Fortune and Dr. R. Strang, the nomination of representatives of Western Australia and Victoria to replace Dr. James Young and Dr. T. E. Lowe was deferred. The replacement of Dr. Watson, who resigned as the representative of the council on the Empire Rheumatism Council, was left in the hands of the chairman and the medical secretary. Formation of Australian Rheumatism Association.—Various speakers stressed the importance of a professional body to work in conjunction with the Australian Rheumatism Council and which would have the same relationship to it as that of the Heberden Society in Great Britain and the American Rheumatism Association in America to the Empire Rheumatism Council and the American Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation, respectively. The value of an association with the British Medical Association was also stressed. The objects of such an association would be to hold meetings of a scientific nature which would help to raise the standard of the practice of rheumatology throughout Australia. Such a body would not in any way conflict with the objects of the Australian Rheumatism Council. It was decided to seek from the Federal Council of the British Medical Association approval for the formation of the Australian Rheumatism Association. This approval was subsequently granted and the initial steps for its formation are being taken.

Visit of Dr. Copeman

Dr. W. S. C. Copeman, O.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.P., Chairman of the Empire Rheumatism Council, spent a month in Australia before leaving for New Zealand on October 4. His visit to New South Wales was sponsored jointly by the Post-Graduate Committee in Medicine in the University of Sydney and the Australian Rheumatism Council, and to other States by the Australian Post-Graduate Federation. Dr. Copeman carried out an extensive tour of the Commonwealth of Australia. He called on the Governor-General while in Canberra and delivered a message of greeting from H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, President of the Empire Rheumatism Council and the Australian Rheumatism Council. He brought before Ministers of the Crown, both Federal and State, and many other influential citizens, including the Lord Mayors of Sydney and Melbourne, by whom he was tendered Civic Receptions, the importance of an organized campaign against the rheumatic diseases. He made a nation-wide broadcast in the Guest of Honour session of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. He visited hospitals and discussed the formation of new Rheumatism Clinics, and the improvement of existing ones, with the staffs of the hospitals, university departments, and, where necessary, with the Minister of Health concerned. The council has reason to believe that these actions will be effective in the improvement of the facilities for the treatment of the rheumatic diseases. He conducted courses of instruction in the rheumatic diseases, lecturing to members of the medical profession, hospital staffs, and medical students.

Not the least of his activities were discussions with the Executive Officers of the Australian Rheumatism Council. At this level he was able to pass on the experiences of the Empire Rheumatism Council in the formative steps and make many suggestions for the future development of the Council which should be of the utmost value. The Council is optimistic about the results of his visit. Already there is a quickening of interest in its work, which will be followed up vigorously. It is felt also that there is a strengthening of the ties that bind the Council with the Empire Rheumatism Council and future relations between the two bodies should be even more helpful than before.

The Council is deeply grateful to Dr. Copeman for the manner in which he devoted himself tirelessly to the cause, and to the Empire Rheumatism Council for the part it played in making the visit possible.