EDITORIAL

The celebration of the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Empire Rheumatism Council has been marked by the most gratifying evidence of the progress of the Campaign against rheumatic disease, and especially welcome has been the encouragement given by the Minister of Health, the Right Hon. Aneurin Bevan, his Principal Medical Officer, Sir Wilson Jameson, and the Nuffield Trustees. The munificent endowment of the Rheumatism Research Centre at the University of Manchester by the Nuffield Trust has already received notice in the press, both medical and lay, and has been widely welcomed; in addition, the Empire Rheumatism Council has provided two research workers and, through its Scientific Advisory Committee, has planned a scheme for investigation on a wide scale into the causation of rheumatoid arthritis.

The celebrations began with the Annual meeting of the Heberden Society which is closely linked with the Empire Rheumatism Council. This was followed by the Annual Dinner, with the retiring president, Dr. C. W. Buckley, in the Chair. Many distinguished visitors were present, including the President of the Royal College of Physicians, Lord Moran; Lord Horder, the Chairman of the Council of the Empire Rheumatism Council; Professor J. A. Höjer and Dr. B. Strandell, officially representing the Swedish Ministry of Health; Dr. Swaim of the American Rheumatism Association; Major-General Sir A. Biggam; and many others.

The Chairman, in proposing the toast of the “Future of the Campaign against Rheumatism” referred to the origin of the efforts to control rheumatic disease which led to the formation of the Empire Rheumatism Council, and to the distinguished physicians of the past whose work had laid the foundations—Heberden, Haygarth, Scudamore, the Garrods, and, in the present, Lord Horder—to whose foresight and energy the formation and progress of the Empire Rheumatism Council owe so much. He pointed out that, side by side with research into aetiology and treatment, must go education of medical practitioners in the treatment, and of the general public in the importance of the early recognition and care which was as important in rheumatism as in tuberculosis and cancer.

Professor L. S. P. Davidson, in replying, developed the same theme with especial reference to the work which had been done in Scotland and the need to encourage young physicians to specialize in the study of this subject. He was optimistic about the future, and noted that general physicians were becoming increasingly impressed by its importance.

Dr. W. S. C. Copeman, in proposing the toast of the guests, paid tribute to the importance of the work they had done, especially in Sweden and the United States, and to the Government’s gratifying tributes to the efforts of the Council during the past ten years. Dr. Loring Swaim and Dr. Strandell replied.

On the following day a meeting was held to welcome the representatives of the Swedish Government. Lord Horder presided and was supported by His Excellency the Swedish Minister, who introduced Professor Höjer and Dr. Strandell. Professor Höjer then gave an address on the development of the study and treatment of the rheumatic diseases in Sweden, which is reported in full in this issue (p. 183).

A reception was held on October 28 in the Apothecaries Hall, when Lord Horder received the guests. In the unavoidable absence of the Minister of Health he was supported on the platform by the Minister for Agriculture, the Right Hon. Tom Williams; Sir Wilson Jameson, Principal Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health; Air-Vice-Marshal Don; Sir Walter Kinnear; Professor Höjer; Dr. Loring Swaim (U.S.A.); Mr. Izard; and other members of the Empire Rheumatism Council. Sir Wilson Jameson, speaking on behalf of the Minister of Health, made an important speech (which appears at p. 218 of this issue) giving great encouragement to the work of the Council, and showing the interest which is being taken by His Majesty’s Government in the campaign against rheumatism. A telegram was read from H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, President of the Council. There were also messages from the Dominions and from the American Medical Association and the American Rheumatism Association. The text of the Duke of Gloucester’s telegram and of the other congratulatory messages appear at p. 217.

On October 29 a luncheon was given at the Savoy Hotel by His Majesty’s Government, with the Right Honourable Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Health, presiding. There were thirty guests, among whom was the secretary of the Nuffield Trustees. The Minister made a speech in which he reaffirmed his intention that rheumatic disease should be one of the principal priorities under the National Health Act, co-equal with tuberculosis, cancer, and venereal disease. The scheme would be on the lines laid down in the E.R.C. publication, Rheumatism, a Plan for National Action. He paid tribute to the work of the Council, which had culminated in putting rheumatism on the map with 100% official approval and backing, a record to be proud of. He stressed the need for research, and also for classification of the many disorders grouped...
under the term rheumatism. He welcomed the munificent action of the Nuffield Trustees, whose gift of £100,000 for research was of such great importance. There was still much to be done, and he urged the Council to persevere in its work.

The same afternoon a reception was given by the British Council to welcome the Swedish representatives. Two hundred guests were invited and were received by Sir Edward Mellanby of the Medical Research Council. This completed a memorable week-end, a landmark in the history of the Campaign and one full of promise for the future.

During the last few months the Ligue International contre le Rhumatisme has been re-born, and it promises to be a healthier child than ever before. It is truly international, with its President, Dr. Ralph Pemberton, in the United States; its Vice-President, Prof. Kontchabroshy, in Russia; and its secretariat, in charge of Dr. van Breemen, in Amsterdam. In its almost premature fertility it has itself produced three children: a European section, chairman Dr. Mathieu-Pierre Weil; an American section, chairman Dr. R. B. Osgood, and secretary Dr. Loring Swaim; and a British section, chairman Dr. W. S. C. Copeman, treasurer Dr. G. D. Kersley, and secretary Dr. Oswald Savage.

Both the British and American sections have adopted the Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases as their official Journal, and we hope that this will be an important step forward in the liaison between English-speaking nations in their fight against rheumatism, and a helpful preliminary to the holding of the greatest Congress of those interested in the subject ever to be planned—the meeting of the whole Ligue in the United States in 1949.

Some editorial explanation is perhaps needed for the extremely long delay in publication of the September issue of the Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases and also for the delay in the appearance of this present issue. It might be thought that the end of hostilities would have brought an improvement in paper supplies, but this has not been the case. Indeed, it is more difficult now than it ever was during the war years to obtain the quality of paper which is necessary for a specialist journal carrying numbers of often very detailed illustrations. The September issue was, in fact, ready for press early in November last, but could not be printed because there was no paper. The contents of this present issue were with the printer by early December, but were delayed for similar reasons. The Editors would like to assure subscribers that everything is being done to bring future issues up to date.

A word should also be said about the cumulative ten-year index which, in an editorial in the June issue, was promised for the end of this year. The index is in course of preparation, but more work has been involved in compiling it than was anticipated; this fact, together with paper and printing difficulties, has made it necessary to postpone publication.

The abstracting service now established by the British Medical Association under the general supervision of the Editor of the British Medical Journal will be supplying the Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases with an abstracting section, as from the March issue of 1947. This section will contain informative abstracts from the world’s medical literature. The inclusion in it of titles of articles not abstracted will, it is hoped, make it a complete record of current literature on the rheumatic diseases, which will be of the greatest value to all students of the subject.