EMPIRE RHEUMATISM COUNCIL

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDATION

The Empire Rheumatism Council celebrated the tenth anniversary of its foundation with a reception held in the Hall of the Society of Apothecaries, London, on Monday, October 28. It had been expected that the guests would be received by the Minister of Health and by Lord Horder, but unfortunately Parliamentary business detained Mr. Aneurin Bevan. The Chief Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health, Sir Wilson Jameson, was, however, able to take his place. The guests of honour were: His Excellency the Swedish Minister, M. B. G. Prytz; Professor J. A. Højer, C. M. O., and Dr. B. Strandell, Deputy C. M. O. Royal Swedish Health Department; Dr. Loring T. Swaim of the American Rheumatism Association; the Right Hon. Tom Williams, Minister of Agriculture; Sir Walter Kinnear; and Air Vice-Marshal F. P. Don.

Opening Remarks by Lord Horder

Lord Horder opened the celebrations with an informal speech as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me say at the outset that this is not intended to be so much a speech-making occasion as a social gathering of members of our Council and their friends to discuss among themselves, with what measure of congratulation is warranted, the work of the past ten years, and to make, I hope, good resolutions to continue and extend that work in the future. Accordingly I shall be brief.

MESSAGE FROM H.R.H. THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER

We have been honoured by a message from our Royal President, cabled from Government House, Canberra, through Sir Godfrey Thomas:

'As President of The Empire Rheumatism Council, I send greetings to the distinguished guests present on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of our foundation.

I congratulate the Council on the work already done, and I look forward with confidence to further success in the fight against rheumatic suffering and disablement.

(Signed) HENRY

President.'

Congratulations from American Medical Association

We have been also honoured by a number of other cordial greetings, amongst which is one from the American Medical Association, as follows:

'On behalf of the American Medical Association, I wish to tender congratulations to the Empire Rheumatism Council on its tenth anniversary celebration on October 28. The annual reports of the Council have been read with interest in this country, and the fact that the work of the Council could be carried on as well as it has been in the face of the war constitutes a tribute to you and your colleagues.

The American Medical Association extends to you our best wishes for success in the attack on the problems of rheumatism in the British Empire.

(Signed) GEORGE F. LULL.'

DOMINION MESSAGES

We are saluted by the High Commissioner of Canada, representing a Dominion in which, I am glad to say, there is a Council affiliated with our own in the campaign against rheumatism.

From the other great Dominions we have assurances of similar participation in that campaign.

SUPPORT FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Mr. Bevan, the Minister of Health, is unfortunately prevented from attending. The affairs of the gallant principality of Wales are before the House of Commons this afternoon and demand his presence there. In accepting, some days ago, an invitation to this reception, he wrote that 'he would be delighted to come'. I take that as a good omen. I have every reason to think that he intends, during his term of office, to take effective action for the relief of the great multitude of sufferers from rheumatic diseases. For far too long a term, these people have been 'the forgotten folk' of an otherwise admirable system of public health administration. Provision of effective treatment has been possible for a small percentage only of the scores of thousands of those afflicted. We look confidently to Mr. Bevan to remedy that, for we know him to be a man of vigour, ability, and strong determination to get things done.

By happy choice Mr. Bevan has nominated Sir Wilson Jameson, Chief of his Medical Staff at the Ministry of Health, to be his deputy. We may hope to hear some words from him to-day, if not of commendation for output, then of cheer for our future. I shall ask Sir Wilson to follow me.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM SWEDEN

I have also to welcome two distinguished representatives of the National Health Services of Sweden, a country which has set such a good example to the rest of the world in the provision for rheumatic patients.

AMERICAN RHEUMATISM ASSOCIATION

There is also with us a representative of the American Rheumatism Association, which works in cordial co-operation with our Council. Dr.
Loring Swaim's presence is endorsed by a message from his Association:

'We of the American Rheumatism Association commend most highly the Empire Rheumatism Council for its splendid work during the past ten years. This work has been most useful to the divisions concerned with the administration of good medical care for rheumatic subjects, and the encouragement of both clinical and fundamental research. We wish your Council an even greater record of accomplishment during the next ten years. With heartiest congratulations to you all.

(Signed) WALTER BAUER.

President American Rheumatism Association.

Let me conclude with a very brief acknowledgement to my colleagues, medical and lay, who have given such distinguished and self-sacrificing help to the work of the Empire Rheumatism Council. It would take us far into the night if I were to attempt to record names and particular services rendered. I must be content with this note of general appreciation of their loyal and tireless help. When, ten years ago, we organized the Empire Rheumatism Council, with its impressive recruitment of medical and lay supporters, and when the press, both of the home country and of the Dominions and Colonies, contributed its all-powerful help in arousing public opinion, I felt for the first time that there was hope for a project that had long been in my mind. This project was to make a concerted attack, by way both of research and of treatment, against this enemy to public and private peace and economy. It could not be foreseen then that the mania of one man would so infect a great nation as to shatter the peace of the world. The harsh struggle for survival of our British Commonwealth and its allies inevitably affected our work, as it did that of other bodies devoted to the only war which is sanctioned by reason and good intent—the war against the secular enemy of mankind, preventable disease. But, in carrying on as we decided to do under most serious difficulties, I believe—and I say so with due humility on behalf of my colleagues and myself—that we have done effective work, the fruit of which will be garnered in the near future.'

Speech by Sir Wilson Jameson

Sir Wilson Jameson then spoke as follows.

"As Lord Horder has explained I am here deputizing for the Minister of Health, who is detained by parliamentary business. The lot of a senior civil servant is not always a happy one, and I feel it unhappy to-day when I know that most of you came to hear Mr. Bevan, and instead you are going to hear a few remarks from one of the medical bureaucrats. The Minister is very sorry indeed that he could not be here to-day, for this problem of rheumatism is one that has engaged his personal interest, but he has to wind up for the Government in a House of Commons debate on Welsh affairs.

This function is in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Empire Rheumatism Council. What can I say about the Empire Rheumatism Council? It has had a very active life of ten years in spite of the fact that a number of those years were war years. It has done a great deal to stimulate public interest in rheumatism. It has been very helpful in informing medical opinion on the subject. We are very grateful to you, Lord Horder, for the active part that you have played in all this, and we are grateful also to Dr. Copeman who has served the Council as secretary. The Manual which you have put out by the Council, together with the primer by the American Association are, I think, the best guides in English as to what should be done in the problem of rheumatism. You have been of direct help to the Ministry of Health. The Minister has a Medical Advisory Committee, which has a subcommittee on rheumatism, and this has put forward certain recommendations for the guidance of the Minister in connexion with any official plans for an attack upon rheumatism. That committee arrived at its conclusions very largely upon the basis of what you and Dr. Copeman, your indefatigable secretary, put forward. The plan is that we should have certain centres for research and diagnosis, which should be closely linked with university medical departments, also that there should be peripheral centres, and, finally, that there should be beds for long-stay cases in institutions. That is the plan which has been recommended to the Department, and that is the plan which we shall in effect follow.

It is interesting to record that already there are movements going on in various parts of the country—in Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Bristol, and in Scotland, as well as, of course, in London. Some of these have been proceeding for a considerable time, and I think the whole outlook is very encouraging at the present moment. It is a matter of great gratification that the Trustees of the Nuffield Foundation have been so wise and so generous as to give no less a sum than £100,000 to the University of Manchester, spread over ten years, to enable a scheme of the kind you have in mind to be brought into effect. That is a really first-class practical effort.

Rheumatism is a great social problem, and as a result it is an economic problem as well. Not only that, but it is a medical problem. There is still a vast amount of work to be done on the subject of rheumatism. We do not even know the cause of rheumatism, and, indeed, my friends in physical medicine inform me that only too often the treatment provided is of a miscellaneous variety. These matters, we think, should be followed out in this plan of centres for diagnosis and research. If we get an organization of that kind I am sure that out of all we learn we shall get certain leads which the more specialist research workers will be able to follow up, and we shall alight upon one or more causes of this social problem. The causation of the disease to a person like myself is most interesting, because, although a great deal can be done to relieve
pain and suffering, the real aim must be the prevention of rheumatism, and until some work is done on the causation we are not likely to get very far on the preventive side.

A problem of this kind cannot be tackled without Government help, and I want to make it perfectly clear so far as my Ministry is concerned that we are going to make rheumatism one of the big problems that will be tackled under the National Health Service. Of course, we can do only what accommodation and staff will permit. No doubt difficulties in this respect will be overcome, but we must have adequately trained staff to deal with the problem.

Then I want to say to the medical profession that if rheumatism is to be properly studied in these centres as I have indicated we must have at any rate a group of young people who are adequately trained in the first instance as general physicians and who, over and above that, have had training in the study of rheumatic diseases up to the point to which we can carry it at the present time. If young people will come forward and take advantage of the opportunities now available, we can offer them scope in this field of rheumatism. They will be general physicians with rheumatic diseases as their particular speciality. In addition we need physiotherapists, we need social workers, and other groups of workers, and to those who have ambitions in that direction I say the same thing. If they care to interest themselves in this problem there will assuredly be a place for them in the National Health Service so far as rheumatism is concerned. More than that, the medical student should have more opportunity during his undergraduate days of studying this great problem of chronic disease, for it is what he will have to deal with so often in his subsequent practice as a general practitioner, and in the past he has had very little opportunity of studying cases of chronic disease.

I wanted to make it clear what the intention of the Ministry is in respect of rheumatism. I wish the Council an even more successful ten years in the future than they have had in the past. All these official schemes for National Health Services and the like will not thrive in the absence of first-class voluntary effort, and if the Empire Rheumatism Council will go on in the same way for the next ten years no one will be better pleased than the Ministry of Health."

**Research**

In the tenth Annual Report of the Empire Rheumatism Council, Lord Horder said that, acting on the recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee, the Council has appointed two full-time Registrars, whose duty it will be to investigate the factors in the causation of rheumatoid arthritis: in the first instance it has been decided to deal with a token 100 cases. If this preliminary piece of clinical research is promising it is intended to investigate 2,000 cases of the disease. A carefully planned questionnaire and case-note has been prepared by the S.A.C., and this work will make it possible for new facts to be revealed and correlated in connexion with this important group of rheumatic cases.

**UNDERGRADUATE WEEK-END COURSE IN RHEUMATIC DISEASES**

The first undergraduate week-end course in rheumatic diseases was given by the Empire Rheumatism Council on Nov. 22, 23, and 24 at the British Red Cross Society's Clinic for Rheumatism, Peto Place, London. The inaugural lecture was given by Lord Horder. This was followed by a lecture on specific arthritides, by Dr. K. Stone. Dr. M. B. Ray then gave a survey of the apparatus used at the Clinic, and this was followed by a complete tour of the Clinic and demonstration of hydrotherapeutic treatments.

Saturday's lectures began with one by Dr. W. S. C. Copeman on non-articular rheumatism, followed by Dr. W. S. Tegner on rheumatoid arthritis. A luncheon was then given by the Council at the White House. Dr. W. S. C. Copeman, in the absence of Lord Horder, took the chair. In the afternoon there was a demonstration and lecture on osteo-arthritis by Dr. E. Fletcher, who was followed by Dr. G. D. Kersley, speaking on ankylosing spondylitis, and by Dr. J. W. Shackle who dealt with laboratory investigations. Miss L. Raftery gave a lecture on the gynaecological causes of low back pain.

On Sunday morning Dr. D. Baker lectured on rheumatism in childhood, and Mr. P. Ascroft on sciatica. In the afternoon Dr. H. Turney spoke on Gout and Dr. F. C. Golding on X-ray diagnosis. The final lecture was given by Mr. W. D. Coltart on orthopaedic aspects of rheumatic disease.

The course was limited to forty undergraduates in their final year, and those attending represented most of the London teaching hospitals.