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I. President's Address

Leroy M. S. Miner

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR DENTAL RESEARCH

SCIENTIFIC PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING: MARCH 25-28, 1928¹

COMPILED BY WILLIAM J. GIES, F.A.C.D.²

Secretary of the Committee on Organization, New York City

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I. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS³

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A. Introduction

The late President Charles W. Eliot is credited with the observation that the progress made by any profession is dependent largely upon

¹ Each session of the meeting (except one as noted), and the informal dinners on the evenings of March 25, 26, and 27, were held in the North Room of the Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D. C. The chairman at the sessions was Leroy M. S. Miner, Harvard University, President, or R. W. Bunting, University of Michigan, Vice-President, of the Association. To prevent conflict with the program of the coincident Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Association of Dental Schools, at the same hotel, no sessions were convened during the mornings or afternoons of March 26 and 27, and none on the morning of March 28. An account of the executive proceedings will be published in the supplement of this volume, in the number for December, 1928. Abstracts of the papers presented at the first five annual meetings of the Association were published in the last preceding issue of the *Journal of Dental Research*: 1928, viii, pp. 209-229.

² Most of the abstracts have been prepared by those who presented the corresponding papers. All have been verified by the authors.

³ Delivered at the opening of the second session, after the Association's informal dinner on March 25. See page 413.

the quality of its research. The indifference of both the dentist and the physician to original investigation of the biological problems related to the broad field of stomatology has retarded progress in a fundamental appreciation of the importance of these relationships.

Intensive study of the mechanical problems of dentistry, and the resulting remarkable development in this field of dental service for a long period, almost entirely diverted attention from cell and tissue reactions in the mouth and in the organism as a whole. Mechanics overlooked and often even initiated pathology, partly due to the fact that commonly no local primary symptoms developed following mechanical treatment. When it became apparent, however, that these seemingly innocent deviations from normal in the mouth could be the source of serious secondary symptoms in various parts of the body, then, and not until then, did we begin to appreciate the biological importance of teeth in both health and disease. It became increasingly clear to all those who gave this matter any thought that a complete change in the philosophy of dentistry and dental service must be made; that a new attitude must be developed, not only by dentistry but by medicine as well, toward fundamental dental problems; and that the need for substantial scientific research in biological relationship was paramount.

Many in both professions discussed this subject from various viewpoints. There was rather general agreement that a serious defect in caring for the health of the nation existed. To Professor Gies belongs the credit for seeing not only the real root of the trouble, but also for developing a constructive program for eliminating it. This program contained three important parts: First, the establishment of the *Journal of Dental Research*; second, the formation of the International Association for Dental Research; third, an effort to develop an interest in the support of dental research in dental and medical schools.

The *Journal of Dental Research*, established in 1919, now speaks for itself. It is an achievement in dental journalism of which dentistry should feel proud. That it is conducted with as high scientific, literary, and ethical standards as any of the journals in medicine or biology is a generally accepted fact.

The second item on Professor Gies' program, the International Association for Dental Research, was founded in December, 1920,

“in order to promote broadly the advancement of active research in all branches of dentistry and in related phases of the arts and sciences that contribute directly to the development of dentistry. And further to encourage and facilitate coöperative effort and achievement by, and mutual helpfulness among, investigators in all nations in every division of stomatology to the end that dentistry may render cumulatively more perfect service to humanity.”

These are worthy aspirations, and should inspire every one who has the interests of dentistry at heart to make them realities. The charter members of this Association were primarily interested in research and in the development of research, not in organization machinery. Hence, the regulations for conducting its affairs were made as simple as possible. As a result it is happily free from professional politics.

Slow, quiet, but substantial growth, has marked the years of its existence. The various sections have developed their local interests as they desired, but the interests of the whole have been developed at the annual meetings. Usually these have been coincident with the meetings of the Association of American Dental Schools. One year our Association furnished the program for one of the sessions of that organization, but announcement of this fact was omitted from the program of the American Association of Dental Schools.^{3a}

At the annual meeting held in New York last April, an Organization Committee was appointed to coördinate the activities of the Association, that its work might be made increasingly effective. Dr. Gies, as Secretary of this committee, has been untiringly active, and I feel sure that this meeting marks the development of a virility which should make this Association a very effective instrument for the service of mankind.

B. Membership

There are many phases of the work of this Association which might be discussed in a president's address. I prefer, however, to concentrate my efforts and discuss only the matter of membership, leaving plenty of ammunition for future presidents to consider.

^{3a} See the Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the International Association for Dental Research: *Journal of Dental Research*, 1928, viii, p. 215.

There are, it seems to me, at least three groups of men and women who might be interested in dental research: First, the investigators; second, the administrators; and third, the donators.

Article IV, Section 1, of the constitution defines eligibility for membership as follows:

“Any person who has conducted and published an account of a meritorious original investigation in dental science or in any of the sciences contributory to stomatology, shall be eligible to membership in this association, providing such person conforms to the recognized standards of professional ethics.”

Clearly, the purpose of this organization was to afford a means by which those pursuing investigations in dental science could convene at stated intervals and obtain the benefits which naturally come from collaboration and association. Hence the eligibility provisions in Section 1.

The *second group*, the administrators, need, however, stimulation, education, and encouragement in matters of research far more than do the investigators. The investigators are already interested, and are only anxious for greater opportunities to pursue quest of the unknown. Deans of dental schools and of medical schools, superintendents of hospitals, and directors of dental infirmaries, on the other hand, are frequently indifferent, and yet by their influence research matters could be made to flourish. While these men may not be able actually to undertake serious research themselves, are they not in position to promote broadly and effectively the advancement of active research in all branches of dentistry? Activity in research in all these institutions is far below what it should be, and in many instances none whatever is being done. No doubt there are numerous causes for this, but an indifferent attitude is one of them. The Organization Committee tried very hard to show the officers of the American Association of Dental Schools good reasons for holding a joint session of the School and Research Associations, so that this phase of dental school activity might have special recognition. But these efforts were unsuccessful, which seems most unfortunate.

Is it not a proper function of this Association to help correct these deficiencies, which are retarding the progress of dentistry? And may

not this be done in part by making it possible for these administrators to become members of this Association?

The success of the two-three-graduate plan of dental education proposed by Dr. Gies in Bulletin Nineteen of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, must depend, in my opinion, for its success, in considerable part upon the effectiveness of the graduate program. The graduate program, to be effective must be, in quality of instruction and character of work done, of real post-graduate grade equal to, and comparable with, graduate instruction and work in any of the professional or graduate schools in the University. This quality of instruction in turn must depend on the development of an adequate research program. Therefore, the two-three-graduate plan is dependent on the development of an adequate research program; and what is true of the two-three-graduate plan is equally true in the last analysis of any forward looking plan of dental education. If this reasoning be sound, is it not most important for administrators of both dental and medical schools, and directors of their clinical adjuncts, the hospital and dental infirmary, to be thrown as much as possible into a research atmosphere, and be imbued with its importance. Surely the answer to this is in the affirmative. We have, then, good reason for adding a clause to Section 1 of Article IV, making deans of dental and medical schools and hospital superintendents eligible for membership. If a distinction in the type is desirable, that can be provided for.

The *third group*, the donators, are a necessary part of this research ensemble. No one has yet been able to demonstrate satisfactorily which one of the legs is the most necessary in a three-legged stool. No matter how enthusiastic an investigator may be and how sympathetic an administrator may be, research matters may be flat until the donator comes along and supplies the necessary funds. This organization at the present time is entirely free from all commercial entanglements, and to do its most effective work, must remain forever so. But this organization may be of great help in advancing the third part of Dr. Gies' program, namely, the development of support of dental research in dental and medical schools, and thereby promoting the whole cause of dentistry, through its influence in demonstrating to men philanthropically inclined the opportunity for real service to