

## I.A.D.R. Presidential Inaugural Address\*

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It is a great honour for me to find myself President of an organisation which has done so much for dental research, which enjoys such a deserved reputation, and in fact reflects the altruistic activity of a long line of honoured office-bearers and their councillors, many of whom are here tonight, who from small beginnings have built up so great a structure.

It will seem strange to many of you to be addressed by a President, if not in a foreign language, at least in a variant of English which must indicate that he comes from some remote area. While I have had ample opportunity, if I wanted, to become properly acquainted with the language spoken in Hollywood and other parts around here, I must confess that I have not sufficiently taken those opportunities, but with characteristic British conservatism I speak to you in the old dialect which still lingers in London. Not less strange is it for me, I assure you, to find myself once again following American customs fundamentally uncongenial to my nation, such as drinking ice-water at a banquet or making a serious speech after a good dinner.

However, I am glad too to have an opportunity of saying a few words because, while the great preponderance of our members are inhabitants of North America, there is also a steadily increasing number which dwell in quite different and even extremely distant places and who view the Association, not as you do from its centre, but as I do from the periphery. They will, I believe, be increasingly concerned with the international aspects of our activities. This is of course no new consideration for you. In 1953, Dr. F. A. Arnold in his Presidential Address announced his intention to work towards this end, and many succeeding Presidents and Councils have supported this intention. In particular, I remind you of the most informative address by Dr. Jim English, whose special interests as chairman of one of our committees continue to be directed to this field.

Undoubtedly progress has been made, and though there have been some disappointments and divisions of opinion, I do not think we should allow ourselves to be at all discouraged by these. The situation is that, throughout the world, interest in dental research has been vastly increased, and in several more areas such research has reached a high state of development. Compared with even 10 years ago, there has been remarkable growth. In this spread of interest into territories and also institutions where dental research was not previously much pursued, the I.A.D.R. together with its organ, the *Journal of Dental Research* has played a very great part—not only by enlisting dental research workers as members but just as much by encouraging and facilitating interchange of information and promoting, where possible, personal contacts between workers.

There are many of us who would like to see a more formal relationship between groups of workers in all the different countries where dental research is active through membership of one Association. Workers in many countries have already chosen to join our Association with this end in view, well knowing that they would in all probability never be in a position to attend its Annual Meeting in America or even to have any effective representation on its Council. In other countries it has been more generally felt (and sometimes

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strongly expressed) that difficulties of distance or language or some fear of loss of autonomy would debar them from any close relationship with our Association, and that they would do better to confine themselves to membership of organisations in their own region, several of which enjoy a high standing. We should not, I believe, be too concerned that they do not hold or at once seek our membership, though we should like much more contact with them.

In a country such as my own, where nearly all dental research workers are I.A.D.R. members, there is a strong incentive for everyone entering this field to join us and associate with all the rest; especially as it is recognised locally that membership of our Division implies that an individual has contributed original work of reasonable value and that his candidature has been approved by the Divisional President from his personal knowledge. There is indeed some definite prestige value in this membership.

But in a country where some other dental research organisation is already established, there is not the same incentive. New workers will naturally join the organisation to which most local workers belong. Our *Journal* is already available to them, as theirs are to us, and our *Abstracts* can be purchased. The opportunities they would have for personal association with our members in America are in any case minimal. Travel grants for the purpose of attending the Annual Meeting in America are extremely rare in Europe and no tax reductions can be expected to diminish personal expenditure, which for a European is very heavy.

It is indeed quite unrealistic to suppose that in countries or larger areas where there are already good dental research organisations their ordinary members will in general wish to leave them and join I.A.D.R. But some of their members already hold a dual or even multiple membership and these are exceptional persons of unusual international spirit. Their number I believe will increase (although the matter of multiple dues is involved), and from such people new Sections and Divisions will arise; this is happening in continental Europe at this very moment.

Another theoretical possibility is that the major dental research organisations might agree to become united. Those who are used to watching international affairs may guess how vast a task it would be to bring this about and how long it would take. We might also enquire whether the benefits would be correspondingly large, bearing in mind that too vigorous attempts to achieve uniformity might cause resentment and hamper local initiative, involve uncertain financial commitments and perhaps even a polyglot secretariat. Some progress may be made along the lines of the various bodies recognising each other's membership for certain specific purposes.

I think it is quite clear that the various Divisions of I.A.D.R. can only continue to develop well upon a basis of very considerable autonomy, such as they already, to a great extent, enjoy. It may well be that you will wish to increase that local autonomy to the extent of delegating to the various Divisions, for example, the right of electing members, which is at present only exercised by the Annual General Meeting in America on the advice of a central committee (though membership of some Divisions has additional requirements).

The different Divisions are already independent financially as regards their own activities, depending upon locally collected dues and not drawing any quantum of the dues paid to headquarters. The latter are regarded as corresponding to services received particularly in the form of circular letters mailed. These circular letters may help to some extent to maintain a vital contact with distant members, a matter of the greatest importance, though also of extreme difficulty; but most of them concern the A.G.M. and it must be remembered that of members living outside America the proportion likely to be able to attend an Annual General Meeting in America is probably far less than 1 per cent;

and apart from drawing attention to the date and place of the meeting (which information is also published elsewhere) these circulars achieve little purpose and have not been greatly valued. Likewise, the opportunity to vote in the election of officers is not likely to be much appreciated unless there is more than one candidate nominated for a single office and unless the voter has some personal knowledge of the candidates. The opportunity of voting on measures affecting the Constitution and Bye-laws, however, is certainly appreciated.

The Annual General Meeting in its traditional form falls clearly into two parts: the scientific part and the administrative part.

The scientific part is a function which is indeed a feast for those who have our interests; and though like other feasts it can sometimes cause indigestion in those whose stomachs are not sufficiently strong, its organisation has always seemed to me admirable considering the inherent difficulties. There must be some doubt as to what it will become if the number of participants goes on increasing, but I am well aware of the difficulty of screening proposed contributions on the score of merit and I say no more about this.

But in the administrative part of the A.G.M. I think the situation is very much less happy if the I.A.D.R. is really considering itself an international body. As regards the representation of Divisions and Sections outside the American continent, it is perhaps not very important how many Councillors they are entitled to provide: the practical consideration is that in most years many of them are likely to have no representation at all because the distance their representatives would have to travel makes it impossible. If they do not come, these representatives have no information as to the agenda, and non-American members do not learn what was to be discussed or what decisions were taken until about nine months later.

I am well aware of course that the officers and Council of I.A.D.R. have always done what they could to minimise the disadvantages of the present position and to treat the extra-American members, their Divisions and Sections, with consideration and generosity. This, I know, is widely appreciated. I think, however, that eventually the Association will have to consider whether its Council should not be a smaller, more mobile and more representative body which would meet occasionally or periodically in different Divisions. This would strikingly demonstrate the international character of I.A.D.R. and greatly strengthen the bonds between its different parts, which at present are sometimes dangerously slender. But as meeting places have, I think, already been selected up to the year 1969, it does not appear that such a thing could occur soon. Some at least of these A.G.M.'s might coincide with some other international meeting as has been suggested. At present it appears that in most countries where dental research is active there is little difficulty in providing opportunities for workers to present a summary of their work before a critical audience, or in obtaining publication of acceptable papers in suitable journals. What in many countries until recently was rare, and in some still is, was good contact with workers in other countries; such as can be afforded by a symposium by leading workers from all over the world on specific problems of investigation in the dental field. The value of such symposia was emphasized by Dr. Ned. B. Williams in his Presidential Address in 1958.

This type of meeting, as you know, meets quite a different need from those for which I.A.D.R. normally provides, but one which is fully in accordance with its Objects. You have much more experience of them in North America than exists in most other places and appreciate their value, which is particularly great to those in the fortunate position of being able to attend, but not limited to these, since subsequent publication spreads the benefit widely.

Symposia of this character are now more common in Europe also, but there are probably few things which can and do add more to the reputation of I.A.D.R. than the organi-

sation of international discussions of this or other kinds in places where attendance by non-American members and members of other dental research organisations of high standing is possible. It is quite clear, however, that owing to the limitation of its finances, I.A.D.R. is not in a position to initiate such enterprises unless able to secure complete financial support from some external sources in each case.

The I.A.D.R. now has valuable experience of two international meetings of a rather different sort, one in New York and the other in Bonn. These were very useful and enjoyable, and we are all very much indebted to those who organised and sponsored them. It might seem ungrateful to criticise them in any way, but I think on reflection we might feel that certain developments might be advantageous. It should perhaps be possible specifically to encourage members of other regional dental research bodies to attend and some also to participate, and certainly to permit and encourage the attendance of all our own members who care to make the journey. It should also be an aim to provide some translation facilities at least into (or out of) the language of the country where the meeting is held, perhaps in the form of translated summaries. While fortunately large numbers of our colleagues understand English, many do not do so very well and I believe a gesture of this kind would in some areas be very much appreciated. And it might be prudent to limit presentations to original recent work excluding reviews and surveys.

Whether in the form of a symposium upon a particular problem or of an international scientific meeting at which short original papers are given, I earnestly hope that I.A.D.R. will adopt as a policy the promotion of such a meeting every 3 or 4 years at convenient places, either alone or in collaboration with other bodies, national or international.

Another action which you have taken to further international relationships is to elect an officer and in fact a President from a country outside America. Anyone so elected, as I have said, must regard this as a very great and deeply appreciated honour, and I know that the British Division also views this as a very large gesture towards an international ideal. I hope that the Association will wish from time to time to repeat this experiment, for experiment it certainly is and not an easy one.

While the main office of I.A.D.R. is in the United States and all its Annual Meetings are held in North America, it is evident that much extra work is thrown upon the American officers when there is a non-American President-Elect. In this case that burden has been carried gladly and most efficiently by Dan Burrill and Joe Muhler, and of course by Reidar Sognaes and his local team, and I know we all feel greatly indebted to them.

It also means that personal consultation between the President and officers during the interval between annual general meetings is going to be more difficult; and as regards the particular interests of the North American Division (where they can be disentangled from the interests of the Association as a whole), there is every reason to think that they can and should be settled at a local level, as in the case of other Divisions. The historical growth of I.A.D.R. makes this disentanglement very difficult, but I have no doubt that over a period of years we shall find a pattern which preserves all the good things we already have and adds to them others which we have not yet got.