

REPORT TO COUNCIL ON COUNCILOR'S TOUR

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From October 23 to October 31, 1959, I visited the physiology departments of the University of Western Ontario, the Mayo Foundation, the University of Minnesota and the University of Manitoba. One of my hosts pointed out that a trip on which I met four past presidents of the Society was not to the grass roots but rather to the old oaks. My hosts arranged for me to meet most Society members and many non-members as well. I was able to discuss problems relating to the American Physiological Society with persons in several pre-clinical departments. The chief topics I discussed were Society finances, compulsory subscriptions to journals, maintenance of standards in physiology, the Federation, and the relation of APS with Canadians and the Canadian Physiology Society. According to custom governing the behavior of a visiting fireman (or as they say in bilingual Canada, un pompier visitant) I earned my way by giving a talk on "The Metabolic Basis of Gastric Acid Secretion, or Twenty Years of Wasted Effort."

In general, members feel that they do not know what the Society finances are. They would like to have a much fuller report of the budgets, both past and proposed. Members who have looked at the previous reports think that they are meaningless, and they would welcome an understandable budget published in THE PHYSIOLOGIST. The budget would be more readily intelligible if the operations of the trust funds and grants were listed separately. Members are particularly in the dark about the Board of Publication Trustees and its relation to the rest of the Society. After I explained as well as I could the financial situation and the use of dues money, I received the impression that there would be no strenuous objection if dues were raised. Members are willing to pay for the functions of the Society if they know the facts. If increase in dues were coupled with dropping compulsory subscription to journals there would be no objection at all.

There is a minority opinion that compulsory subscription to a journal is an appropriate part of membership in the Society. I surmise that subscription to Physiological Reviews weakens this feeling, and I suspect that opinion would be more vigorous if it were subscription to the American Journal of Physiology which is required. One member would like to have compulsory subscription to AJP coupled with a vigorous effort to make it a better journal. The majority opinion appears to be indifferent to compulsory subscription. These members have no objection if subscription really does something for the journal or for the Society. On the other hand, if compulsory subscription does no good, either for the publications or for the Society, then it should be dropped. Some members are astonished that subscriptions do not help the Society. This is another aspect of the confusion and ignorance concerning the functions of the Board of Publication Trustees, and members in general would welcome a clear exposition of this.

Members are interested in the way in which the American Chemical Society sets standards for chemistry departments, and a description of this in THE PHYSIOLOGIST would be welcomed. Members of weaker physiology departments believe a similar function on the part of APS would be helpful. APS could supply information or set standards concerning the support of physiology departments. Even general information as to how many staff members are required for teaching medical students, other kinds of undergraduate students, graduate students and for research would be useful. Since Government agencies are very wary of this kind of activity, some members suggest that APS seek funds from other foundations to carry out such work. Although all members are opposed to setting up an American Board of Physiology, they recognize that the medical boards have fulfilled useful functions.

Canadian schools frequently use external examiners, particularly for Ph.D. theses. There is strong feeling that American schools would do well to set up external examination systems at the level of the preliminary examinations for the Ph.D. American members believe that APS might facilitate this by providing lists of examiners or by setting up a means by which schools could obtain the services of external examiners. On the contrary, there is a vigorous minority opinion that external examiners are undesirable because they tend to enforce uniformity. External examinations would level off the strong points of departments and make departments anxious to see that every topic was covered in a standard way.

It is the universal opinion that the Federation serves a useful purpose and that APS relations with it should be preserved. Members want to attend the Federation, and in general there is no desire for regional meetings of the APS itself. Members are alarmed at the size of the Federation, the enormous difficulty of attending the meetings and the cost. They are horrified at the idea of lengthening the meetings. Members all recognize that the ten-minute paper is the source of many difficulties, and they are willing to see some limitation on it. They believe that the Fall Meetings of APS are useful in allowing unrestricted presentation of ten-minute papers. They also inform me that in most instances travel funds are not tied to the giving of papers. As for means of restricting presentation of papers, the members are not uniform in their opinion. They understand that papers cannot be edited, and they have no enthusiasm for limiting the frequency with which members can present papers. If it were possible papers might be restricted at the source, each department presenting a certain number of its best papers. I gathered that restriction of presentation of papers to members alone, that is elimination of the right of introducing a paper, would be accepted without much difficulty. Although members would like more symposia at the Federation meetings, they would not care for restriction of papers to certain topics. Several members suggested that APS charge \$5 as a program service fee for each paper presented, the money going to the Society General Fund. There is general concern about the quality of the papers presented and especially about the abstracts.

APS is in fact a North American Society, and Canadian members value membership in it. In many respects Canadian and American physiology is a unit, for both have the same employment market, sources of money, problems of training and of maintaining standards. Some Canadian members would welcome increased recognition of the international character of APS.

Recruiting graduate students for physiology seems to be no more successful in the places I visited than in the places I am more familiar with. One member strongly expressed the opinion that we are debasing the profession by our recruiting methods. We should make it hard to get into rather than open to any one we can pull off the streets.



THE EUGENE F. DUBOIS LIBRARY

The Eugene F. DuBois Library was dedicated on November 24, 1959 by the staff of the Second (Cornell) Medical Division, Bellevue Hospital, New York. The library occupies the exact site of the former metabolism ward of the Russell Sage Institute of Pathology where Dr. DuBois did his pioneer research in human metabolism.

Dr. DuBois was Professor of Medicine at Cornell from 1930 to 1941 and Professor of Physiology from 1941 to 1950. The accompanying plaque shows his scientific heritage and illustrations of his activities.

The library is maintained for the use of the clinical and research staffs of the Second Medical Division. The library is well adapted for seminars and clinical conferences.