

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS DENTAL SOCIETY

CHARLES E. PARKHURST, *Editor*

Fifty-six annual meeting, May 5, 1920. Sprague Hall, Boston Medical Library, Boston, Mass. President William J. Speers in the chair.

Scientific program. President's annual address, by William J. Speers, D.M.D. (this page). *Papers* by Percy R. Howe, A.B., D.D.S., Harvard University Dental School, Boston, Mass., on "*recent studies on nutrition in its relation to dental disease*" (to be published in the March, 1921, issue of the JOURNAL OF DENTAL RESEARCH), and by Clarence J. Grieves, D.D.S., Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Md., on "*a classification of teeth, the pulps, apices, and attachments of which may be infective foci in local and systemic disease*" (published in the JOURNAL OF DENTAL RESEARCH, 1920, ii, p. 327).

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL ADDRESS

WILLIAM J. SPEERS

Fall River, Massachusetts

It now becomes my duty at this, the fifty-sixth annual meeting of our Society, to review with you our activities of the past year and to make suggestions for improvement.

Our meeting this year is confined to one day instead of being continued through three, which is our custom, for the reason that, as the National Dental Association will convene in Boston, in August, and other state societies have found by experience that it was practically impossible to obtain a good attendance at the "state meeting" when it was held near the date of the "national meeting," your Executive Committee decided to profit by the experience of others and to make this a one-day session.

When I took office one year ago I heard of expressions of dissatisfaction with certain conditions, with methods of doing things, and about how very little the society was actually accomplishing, etc. Now, most of us are

interested in our Society. We should be ambitious to see it accomplish great things. Many, I fear, are interested only in a passive way and, because of this fact, it is important to have a greater number of constructive spirits—men who will be ready and willing to do the duties assigned to them.

Most of us are busy men, our work is of such a nature that it demands most of our time; but, as has often been said, the busiest men are the ones who accomplish the most outside of the regular routine; and they are generally the ones to call upon when something important should be done. Some members appear to feel that the Society owes them something because they have paid a small sum into its treasury; instead, they should consider it a privilege to be associated with the best men in our state, some of whom have made a national reputation. To one of these we shall be privileged to listen today.

We are very fortunate in having a most capable and active Secretary, who has constructive ideas and is anxious to put them into action. But the Secretary and President cannot accomplish the greatest good without the coöperation and enthusiastic support of all the members. The man who takes no part in the active affairs of the Society is stealing a ride on the chariot of progress, and his standing as a member fails to measure up to that of those who achieve for the organization. A creed I would suggest for our guidance is this: "I will not criticise the Society for failure to accomplish results until I have paid my dues, attended the meetings, suggested to it the things I believe should be accomplished, and done all in my power to help to bring these things to pass."

The only ones who should expect to receive dividends from an enterprise are the ones who have invested something in it. Let us invest our thoughts, time, and energy, in our organization and we shall, I am sure, receive in return dividends of infinite value, not for ourselves alone, but such as will enable us to give more to others.

While making my visits during the year to our own district societies and to other societies outside of the state, I was especially impressed by the mental attainments and cordiality of the men I met. Again I felt exceedingly gratified that I had joined the ranks of this wonderful profession and, especially, that I am permitted to practise in this particular age when very great improvements are being made. This advance means greater responsibility on our part. I think we should constantly urge the adoption of higher educational standards. This can be accomplished in two ways: through the dental schools and through our dental literature.

During the past year we, as a profession, have had presented to us, a new dental journal, the JOURNAL OF DENTAL RESEARCH, which, in the judgment of many of our leaders in thought and action, is the very best yet produced for our profession, and stands as high in rank as the best journals of other professions. I need not say more relative to its attainments and merits, because all of you have received copies and are familiar with it; but I do wish to explain, briefly, the proposed future mode of distribution. It was my pleasure, with several other delegates from our Society, to attend a meeting in New York City, on April 17 last, in the interest of professional journalism. The JOURNAL OF DENTAL RESEARCH was the chief topic of discussion.

Some have asked, "What has become of the *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies?*" In answer I would explain that the editor, who had carried a heavy burden for a number of years, felt that he could do so no longer, with so many other demands on his time. In addition, the very great increase in the cost of publication made it imperative that some other plan be adopted. Just about this time the JOURNAL OF DENTAL RESEARCH came into existence and it was decided to continue the *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies* in the new journal.

The JOURNAL OF DENTAL RESEARCH has had a remarkable career, and is already nearly self-supporting. Consider what that means for a journal that does not accept advertising! This has been accomplished largely through the untiring efforts of its chief editor, Professor William J. Gies, a man of keen intellect, pleasing personality and, apparently, unlimited capacity for work.

Now, gentlemen, that we are fortunate in having this JOURNAL, let us show our appreciation by supporting it. The plan proposed is the following: For the past year we had the special opportunity to obtain the JOURNAL through our Society membership, for \$1.00 a year per member, *in continuance of the old arrangement affecting the Journal of the Allied Dental Societies*, but the U. S. Government will not grant the second-class rate of postage to journals which sell any of their copies *at less than 50 per cent of their regular subscription rates*. Enjoyment of the second-class (reduced) rate of postage is essential to the success of the JOURNAL. Accordingly, the JOURNAL desires to obtain as many subscriptions from our membership as possible at the full rate, \$5.00 a year. Here is where we are put on our honor, so to speak; for, if we do not wish to pay the full price, we may obtain the JOURNAL through the Society at *half-price*—\$2.50 a year—the lowest the JOURNAL may legally offer. We have heard a great cry, for some time, for a strictly *professional* journal. *Now that we have a really admirable one, let*

us support it. I do hope that our Society will, in the very near future, present a large subscription list and show that the Massachusetts dentists appreciate a good thing.

Very briefly I wish to call your attention to another activity of the year. In March our Society received, from the Massachusetts Medical Society, an invitation to send two delegates, specifying that one be the chief executive, to attend, on the 18th, a meeting of a new organization called "The Massachusetts Central Health Council." Accordingly your President, accompanied by Dr. William Rice, attended the meeting.

The plans and purposes of this new organization were explained and are briefly as follows: (1) To bring about a better coördination of the public-health and social agencies of the state, ever striving to prevent an overlapping of the different activities, with a saving of time and energy. (2) To investigate, at the request of any constituent organization, any specifically designated health or social-welfare problems, and make recommendation in reference to same. (3) To keep advised, and to keep the constituent organizations advised, of proposed legislation of interest to any of these organizations. (4) To draft such proposed legislation as may seem necessary or advisable to promote the purposes for which the constituent organizations exist, and to take the measures that may seem advisable to secure the enactment of such legislation; and, also, to represent the constituent organizations at such hearings.

It seems to your President that this is another great step in the right direction, because it should make for greater efficiency in the solution of health and social problems of the state. Besides, it will bring the medical and dental, as well as other health organizations, in the state, into closer harmony with each other. Therefore, I hope our Society will take some action today whereby we shall assume our share of the responsibility and thereby justify the confidence of the medical fraternity.

We are hearing much at present about "mouth hygiene," a subject which cannot be over-emphasized. Here again our Society has been honored, and especially one of its members, by the appointment, on April 8, 1919, of Dr. Edwin N. Kent, to the position of Supervisor of Mouth Hygiene, associated with The Massachusetts State Department of Health. The activities of this office are many and most commendable, some of which are (a) registration of public dental infirmaries, numbering sixty-one at present, with others to be opened. (b) Standardization of these infirmaries. (c) A lecture service through "lecture sets," including manuscripts and lantern slides. (d) A series of letters on mouth hygiene, written to the school children of the state and read in each school-room by the

teacher. (e) A scheme for state-wide tooth-brush drills in our schools. (f) Pamphlets on "the importance of mouth cleanliness," and instruction for home care and other activities, which will be conducive of wonderful results.

Here again we are shown that dentistry is coming into its own.

In reference to illegal practitioners of dentistry, of whom I understand there are quite a number, I wish to say that the present laws are adequate and there are sufficient means of prosecution; but our State Board of Dental Examiners should be assisted in this matter by every registered practitioner, who should obtain evidence if possible, and inform the Board, of any cases which come to his attention. I am sure the name of the informer, in this public service, will always be held inviolate.

During the past year, a number of our members have returned to private practice after discontinuing their war activities. To all such I extend a cordial welcome back to our association and bid them again to take up their duties with us. I also humbly express to them, for you, our gratitude for what they have done for humanity and for the good name of our profession.

It has been my duty and privilege to attend a number of the meetings of our district societies during the year. I find most of them in a healthful condition. There is, however, an excellent opportunity to increase our membership by an active individual solicitation, because our membership at present is but 1,121 of a state registration of 2,850.

Our treasurer reports a sound financial condition, having been able in the past year to purchase an additional \$800.00 worth of Government bonds, making a total of \$4,000.00 so invested.

In August we shall have the privilege of entertaining the National Dental Association. Let us, as hosts, show that Boston is up and doing.

In closing I wish to express my appreciation of the honor shown me in my election to the presidency of this association and also to extend my sincere thanks to the other officers who have assisted me in the year's work.