

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS BEFORE THE NATIONAL DENTAL ASSOCIATION.

By John V. Conzett, D.Sc., D.D.S., Dubuque, Iowa.

(Read before the National Dental Association at Its Twenty-fourth Annual Session, Boston, Mass., August 23-27, 1920.)

IF THERE is anything that I am proud of this day it is that I am a dentist and that I am a member of the National Dental Association, for no profession has made greater progress in the last decade than has the beloved one to which we owe allegiance. Still in its infancy, it has so rapidly advanced that now it takes equal rank with the learned professions of the world, and with its own degree, its individual literature, and specialized colleges. It is ministering to the needs of humanity in a manner that has won the plaudit of the world, and has given her the rightful rank of equality with the other branches of the healing art. All of this should, and does, make us proud and grateful, but with the pride and gratitude which these blessings engender comes the realization of the tremendous responsibility that accrues to us, by reason of this very recognition.

As an organization, we feel that the place accorded to the profession in general has very largely been due to the efforts made possible by the association of the earnest men composing this organization, banded together with one accord for the advancement of the profession in learning, professional efficiency, and the service it may render to humanity. Today the National Dental Association numbers over 25,000 members, and daily are we adding to this

number, until we hope that the day is not far distant when every ethical dentist in the country will be a member and actively engaged in its welfare, and thru it to the good of humanity, whose servant we are.

Much has been given to us and much will be required in consequence. It, therefore, behooves us to take stock of our opportunities, our possibilities, and our ability to measure up to the standard which the position demands.

THE PROBLEM OF FOCAL INFECTION.

The recent trend in medical thought which has placed a tremendous burden of responsibility upon the members of the Dental Profession must be recognized, and met in the spirit of an honest effort to serve humanity in the most helpful manner. No matter how the problem may have come, nor what stigma it may seem to have placed upon some of our efforts of the past we must meet the issue in the spirit of scientific investigation. Not in a reckless stampede to extract all of the teeth that come to us in a diseased condition, for to do this would be to confess our inability to cope with the situation, and would set the profession back one hundred years. This problem as well as every other one that will present in the future, must be met in the spirit of conservation, in which the health of the individual and

his general welfare must be the first consideration, and the financial returns to the dentist should be of secondary importance. It is difficult to disassociate the financial advancement of the individual from the thought of the problem in hand, but when this phase of the problem obtrudes itself into a scientific consideration of any subject, it is impossible to arrive at a perfect solution of the problem. For this reason it is very difficult for the individual dentist to solve many of the problems that daily arise in the practice of his profession, but, fortunately by reason of our banding together for the purpose of mutual helpfulness we have been able to thrust these difficult problems away from our offices and immediate environment and place them in the hands of men that have been specially trained in the various departments of scientific endeavor, and bid them attack them for us.

In this way the various vexing problems of our professional life can and are being solved away from the entanglements of financial conditions. For in this way alone can we be fair to the problem, to our patients, and to the profession.

THE RESEARCH COMMISSION.

By reason of our great ability as an Association we can do as an organization that which we could not possibly do as individuals. Therefore, in the creation of the Research Commission of the National Dental Association, we have taken a forward step that will mean more for the dental profession and thru it to humanity, than anything that we have ever been able to do.

It must be remembered that scientific investigation is not the work of a day, and research is not to be measured by its immediate results. Some of the most far-reaching results are obtained by years of earnest work that for a long

time seemed to be bearing no fruit, so if the results do not seem to be commensurate with expectations, always remember that the gold in richest abundance may lie just beyond the next pickful of earth, and the abandoning of a problem because of the apparent paucity of the lead is unwise and often fatal to the enterprise. I am not making any excuses for our splendid research workers, for they have accomplished wonders in their various fields. I am simply attempting to stimulate some faint hearts that have become critical because of the-to-them poverty of results that have been attained. By reason of the work of our research men, we have attained a position in the minds of scientific men that we would never have reached in any other way, and it is our duty and should be our pleasure, to support them in every possible manner. I, therefore, bespeak for the Research Commission in its various activities, the earnest support and cooperation of every member of the Association.

The Research Institute of the National Dental Association has resolved to discontinue its activities and dispose of its properties and turn the proceeds over to the Research Commission for the prosecution of their work. The institute has not been a failure by any means, and its assets, which will be the property of the National Dental Association from this time, have more than doubled. The purchase of the building at Cleveland was a good piece of business for the property, which was bought at a price of \$52,000.00, is now worth \$112,000.00.

The hope is expressed that similar institutions will be inaugurated in various sections of the country to attempt to carry on the work that the institute was designed to do, and it is my earnest hope that such may be the case, and not allow the apparent failure of the Research Institute to forever bar any repetition of

activities along the same line. I am glad to see the institute liquidate its assets and pass them on to the authorities of the National Dental Association, for there is where they belong, and the fact that the funds are now an inviolable part of the association will still the criticism that has made the work of the officers of the institute so hard. Too much commendation cannot be given to Dr. Weston A. Price, for his zeal in the organization and financing of the institute, and the splendid endowment which is now, (or will be when the business is fully closed) the property of the National Dental Association perpetually dedicated to the cause of dental research, is almost entirely due to his enthusiasm, zeal and ability.

THE NATIONAL DENTAL JOURNAL.

It is not possible for any profession to exist or to make any material advancement without an exchange of professional thought thru the mediumship of some means of adequate publicity. We are very fortunate in having such a mediumship in our splendid National Dental Journal. I am confident that much of the progress that the profession has made in the past few years has been largely due to the influence of this splendid publication. The publication committee should have the gratitude of every member of the association, and particularly is this due to the Editor, Dr. Otto U. King. The splendid success of The Journal has largely been due to the brilliant talents and untiring efforts of our Editor-in-chief, Dr. King, and the appreciation of the entire association should be extended to him.

The Journal in a few short years has been placed upon a fairly sound financial basis.

Starting as a quarterly with no funds, in seven years it has grown into a monthly and gives promise of developing into something still larger and more

brilliant in the not distant future. It now boasts of a property, the financial value of which is not less than \$100,000.00 with a surplus of \$40,000.00. This good work should continue until there is a surplus fund of at least \$500,000.00 to place The Journal on a basis which will insure it against any exigency that might arise. It is a remarkable achievement worthy of our highest commendation, that our Journal has been launched and in so short a time has made a place for itself that establishes it on a parity with the Journals of the senior organization of the healing art. We are indeed proud of our Journal, of the publication committee and the Editor.

THE DENTAL EDUCATIONAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA.

The education of the future dentist has been delegated to the colleges of the country and nobly have they fulfilled their mission. Their task has not been an easy one for the rapid advancement of the profession in scientific thought and professional attainment, has placed an ever-changing condition upon the colleges and their teaching equipment, that has meant no small burden to them. In spite of this they have, for the most part, valiently carried on their work and we owe much of our present position to their untiring efforts and zealous endeavors. However, the educational conditions of our various institutions was in a very chaotic condition some few years back owing to the difference of educational ideals, and opportunities present in the different colleges. So apparent was this to the examining bodies that they suggested the organization of an advisory body composed of five members from each of the National Dental Organizations. Therefore, the Dental Educational Council of America was formed with a membership of five from the National Examiners' Association, five from

the National Faculties Association, and five from the National Dental Association. The work of this body has been productive of the greatest good, and out of the chaotic conditions of the past has been evolved an educational system that is a unit in regard to the preliminary entrance requirements, the curriculum and the management of the institutions in regard to commercialism.

Several colleges that were not living up to the ideals of the profession have been stimulated to better efforts and are rapidly approaching the highest attainment in educational ideals. The greatest good that the council might have attained has been made impossible by the refusal of one branch of the colleges to affiliate with the Educational Council, but in spite of that drawback, the work has progressed in such a manner that it has received the approbation of the United States Government, and during the period of the war was made the official medium of the government's activities in dental education. The future progress of education in the dental profession depends upon a central body which shall have the authority to advise, stimulate, and correct the educational activities of the various institutions. I know of no better medium for this work than the one now functioning, representing, as it does, the three great bodies in dental education, legislation, and execution. I, therefore, bespeak for the Dental Educational Council of America the moral and financial support of the National Dental Association.

THIS YEAR'S CONVENTION.

The dental profession has been accorded the approval of the United States Government, and in all federal activities has been placed upon a parity with the medical profession. This is a proud position, and one that we have labored long and arduously to attain, but no act

of government or legislature can maintain a parity between any professions. If we are to maintain an equality in professional and scholastic attainments, which is the true criterion of worth, it must be because of the individual character of the members composing the profession. If we are to be recognized as a learned profession, if we are to be able to successfully cope with the tremendous health problems that have been placed upon our shoulders, it will be because we have cultivated ourselves along all scholastic lines until we are able to maintain our position in any society and under any conditions. Our schools and colleges are doing splendid work, our Educational Council is demanding a broader and deeper culture, and our examining bodies are becoming more exacting in their demands upon the graduates of the colleges before permitting them to practice their profession, and all of these activities are making for a larger and better culture, and it remains for us, the members of the profession that are now in active practice, to lift up the body of the profession to a higher scholastic and professional level. In order to stimulate such progress in the profession, we have organized our various state societies, and they have accomplished a great work, but there are still greater possibilities beyond, and it is the desire of your officers to still further stimulate the profession to greater and higher endeavors. In accordance with this thought we have instituted a plan of operation in the convention this year that will be of greater educational value than the manner in which conventions have been conducted in the past. As you have seen, the program has allotted to each section the entire time of the convention, so that each section will function thru the entire convention, thus making it possible for the man that is earnest in his desire to receive some training in some special

branch, to devote himself to that section thruout the entire session, and thereby obtain the greatest possible amount in the shortest time. At the same time, we have made it possible for a man to see any of the sections if that is his desire. It is not made manatory for him to take any one section. In this way we hope to overcome the criticism that has so often been expressed that there was so much to see that a man got nothing. If a man desires any one thing, it will be here for him to obtain and if it is not his desire to get it he may go from section to section as in the past, and get what he can.

THE STUDY CLUBS.

In the rapid progress of the profession in the past few years, it has been difficult for the average man to keep up with the attainments of the profession, and the practitioner has felt himself slipping, feeling that the young man just out of college had things that he was not able to obtain. In view of this sentiment in the profession and attempting to minister to it, numerous study clubs have been organized for the purpose of teaching advanced methods and stimulating study along the various problems that present from time to time. This movement has been most laudable and has been productive of much good, but with the good, some evil has crept in and the greatest good has not been accomplished. The study club method is chaotic in that it is individual and without any central advice or control. If the club happens to be in the hands of some competent man, capable of delivering the goods, well and good, but, as it frequently happens, if the club falls into the hands of some man that is simply trying to exploit himself or some product in which he is interested either as inventor or salesman, the result may be far from the best. At best, the present method is far from obtaining the maximum benefit

that might accrue from an organized effort of the profession along the line of extension work. That the work is needed goes without saying, and therefore, it is the pleasure of your present chairman to offer a suggestion for your consideration which he thinks will be productive of the greatest good along the line of extension work.

I would advise that an extension course committee be appointed by the National Dental Association whose duty will be the formulation of the courses of study for the various activities of the profession. That syllabi be formulated for each activity and that these syllabi be given to any club that might wish to pursue that particular course of study. In this way, if a club decided to study the filling of teeth with gold, for instance, or the treatment of root-canals, or conductive anesthesia, they could write to the central extension course committee and obtain the course that they desired and in the pursuance of the same, know that they were in line with the highest authority on the subject, and that the work done under the direction of this committee would receive the proper recognition. I would further advise that this committee have supervision over the men that were giving these courses so that their work might be authoritative. As far as possible, it would be advisable that the men teaching extension courses should be men in active college work, for the reason that this will work in harmony with a further suggestion that I would like to make, that will be in line with the extension work as it has been hurriedly outlined here, and that is, that all of the colleges put in post-graduate courses that will be in harmony with the extension courses as outlined by the extension course committee. In this way the work of extension will stimulate the man in active practice to take up some subject in which he is interested or in which he feels himself

to be deficient, and while the extension club will give him much, it will also stimulate him to greater endeavors and will drive him in large numbers to the colleges in order to take advantage of the post-graduate courses that they will put on. It would be my thought that the men in the extension clubs would be given credit for the work that they have done in the clubs when presenting for post-graduate work, and for this reason would advise that the extension work be placed in the hands of college men, that the work of the clubs and the colleges might be properly co-ordinated.

The central committee should be large enough to allow one man from each specialty of the profession with power to call to his aid such other men as in his judgment were necessary to the proper fulfilling of his duties in the premises. I would advise a committee of ten men, one from each of the sections, Operative Dentistry, Materia Medica and Therapeutics, Prosthetic Dentistry, Crown and Bridge-Work, Oral Surgery including Anesthesia, Orthodontia, Periodontia, Oral Hygiene, Root-Canal Technic, and Scientific Subjects. These men to be the chairman of the various departments and responsible for them, but able to call to their assistance such talent as, in their judgment, seemed to be necessary. In the ultimate working out of this system it might be advisable to confer some degree or certificate of commendation upon the practitioner that completed the courses, but that is a detail than can be worked out by the committee having the matter in charge and is not incorporated in my advice upon the subject.

ORAL HYGIENE.

The matter of the education of the public in regard to the necessity of a clean mouth and teeth should be emphasized in this day as never before, for with all of the knowledge that we now possess concerning the disastrous

consequences attendant upon diseased conditions of the oral cavity, the necessity for Oral Hygiene and Prophylaxis is magnified beyond any of our previous conceptions. We would advise a more emphatic campaign in public instruction by the Oral Hygiene Committee and would advise the passage of such legislation by the association that would stimulate the interest of the profession and thru them the general public, in this important subject. The funds necessary for the prosecution of the work of the committee should not be withheld, and anything that we, as an association, can do, should be done to further the work of this committee. No matter with which we have to deal, is of more importance. We cannot hope to cope with the problem of oral health by the measures which we have been pursuing in the past. Tooth decay and Pyorrhœa is advancing far more rapidly than are the remedial measures which we are instituting, and the only hope for the future lies in the prevention of these diseases thru the instrumentality of a knowledge of the beneficial effects of a clean mouth. The constitutional amendment upon that subject, which will come up for passage at this session should receive the approbation of the delegates and be unanimously carried.

DENTAL INDEX.

Every student of dental literature has felt the necessity of an index that would assist him in the work of studying any subject that he wished to look up. At the present time there is no such work, and the attempt to look up the bibliography of any dental subject is a well nigh hopeless task for the ordinary individual. The consequence is that most of the papers that are written today are devoid of this most essential aid to the studying of the matter presented by the essayist, and not only that, but very few essayists have made any serious

study of the literature bearing upon his thesis, owing to the difficulty of finding the matter upon the subject in hand Dr. A. D. Black has felt the need of such a work and has labored, practically alone, upon the matter for a number of years. The first installment of that work is now ready for the publisher and will soon be available, but the funds for the prosecution of the work have been advanced by Dr. Black and some of his friends. If this most essential work is to progress and the work be carried up to date, and be kept to date, some means must be found to finance it. It is most probable that the sale of the completed work will almost, if not quite, take care of the financial burden, but it is not fair to make some man or set of men assume an obligation that is the duty of the whole profession. I, therefore, advise the taking up of the subject by the Board of Trustees and that they be instructed to formulate some plan by which this work can be carried on and kept up to date.

NOMENCLATURE COMMITTEE.

In relation to the above subject is a matter that has a bearing upon the present difficulty in dental literature that is almost as bad as the lack of an index, and that is the confusion of dental nomenclature. It is true that the difficulty is not as bad as it has been in the past, for the committee of the Faculties Association has done good work, but the need is still urgent for there has not been the general adoption of a uniform nomenclature by all of the members of the profession. The perusal of our literature is proof of the assertion. Some words are used by some authors and other words by other men to convey the same meaning, making for confusion in the minds of the readers. The National Dental Association should be the final court in all such matters, and I

therefore advise the appointment of a nomenclature committee that shall have jurisdiction upon the subject and shall be the final court of appeal upon all controversies concerning the nomenclature of the profession.

PLACE OF HOLDING CONVENTIONS.

The National Dental Association has assumed such majestic proportions in the immediate past, that the place of holding its annual convention is becoming a very serious problem. The city desiring the convention in the future, must side track every other activity at that particular time, for the hotel and convention facilities of any city will be taxed to the utmost by the convention of the National Dental Association. In view of some of the difficulties which we have encountered in the immediate past, I would advise that all invitations for the entertainment of the convention be presented two years in advance and that the Board of Trustees be empowered to investigate the facilities of the city for the entertainment of the convention, and that the approval of the board, or a committee appointed by the board, be necessary before the final selection of the city for the convention.

SILVER ANNIVERSARY.

This year will complete the 25 years of the organization of the National Dental Association. It would be very fitting indeed to recognize the Silver anniversary of the organization in some appropriate manner at the time of the next annual convention. It would be presumptuous for me to attempt to advise the incoming administration concerning the conduct of their convention, and I do not wish to do so in any sense, but simply call the attention of the organization to the splendid history of the past twenty-five years and suggest some adequate method of magnifying the glory of its accomplishments.

SUMMARY.

1. "Benefit accruing to us by organization.
2. "The problem of focal infection.
3. "Consideration of Research Commission and advising continuance of the work of the commission.
4. "Appreciation of our Journal and its Editor and Journal Committee.
5. "The American Educational Council, an appreciation of its work and advice that it be supported by the National Dental Association.
6. "Method of the conduct of this year's convention.
7. "Advising the appointment of an Extension Club Committee.
8. "Advising greater support of the Oral Hygiene Committee and passage of amendment to the constitution proposed in favor of such work.
9. "Advising support of Dental Index.
10. "Advising creation of Dental nomenclature committee.
11. "Remembering the Silver Anniversary.
12. "Advising that invitations for the annual convention be received two years in advance.

In conclusion, allow me to thank the members of the association for the distinguished honor that they have conferred upon me and for the loyal manner in which they have supported the present administration. In particular do I wish to express my appreciation to the officers and committeemen who have labored so assiduously and efficiently to make the convention of this year a success. If any credit is due for the convention of this year by far the greater part is due to their efforts. The local committee, upon whom has fallen the greater burden, is to be commended for their intelligent and faithful work. To all of these men and to the splendid personnel of the entire association, I wish to express my appreciation of their support, and the unflinching courtesy which has been given to me thruout the term of my office.

