

AMERICAN DENTAL SOCIETY OF EUROPE

Jaarvergadering te Amsterdam op 11 Juli 1955

OPENINGSREDE VAN DE VOORZITTER E. J. v. d. BERG, D.D.S.

Mr. Vice-President, members of the American Dental Society of Europe and distinguished guests.

As your president, it is with much pleasure that I welcome both guests and members to our meeting in Amsterdam.

I assure you that everything has been done by the committees to make your stay here one of profit as well as one of relaxation.

To our guests I should like to say: we want you to feel at home and we welcome your presence at our morning sessions and afternoon clinics, hoping you will take an active part in the discussion of the papers.

I should like to address a special word of thanks to our Honorary Secretary, Dr. J. M o l o n y, for the enormous activity he has displayed for the organization of this meeting. I also want to express my sincere thanks to the local committee for the organisation and arrangements in Amsterdam.

Looking over the programme, you will see a list of distinguished men, who have gathered here to give you of their best. We are most gratified at the increasing number of those who gather here for this our annual meeting.

At the same time we feel sad at missing some of those who, in previous years, we looked forward to meeting.

Those members who passed away during last year are: our Vice-President T. H o e k s e m a, H i g h t o n, W a l t e r N e w t o n, C h a r l e s B o i c h a t, R a l p h C o o l e y, G u n n e n A a s g a a r d and J a n M u n t e n d a m.

It is with deep regret that I make this announcement and I would ask you to rise and pay tribute of a moment's silence to their memory.

Article 5 of our bylaws states that the president shall deliver an address before this Society at our annual meeting otherwise I should not be taking more of your time as I have to do now.

In my opinion the best topic for this day is to strike a balance of the situation dentistry is facing to day.

The improvement of the technical and scientific side of dentistry has effected the progress of practice, instruments and materials to such an extent that dentistry reached the remarkably high level of our days.

However, the application of this highstandard dentistry requires so much time and exertion and entails such high laboratory and practice expenses that it is only available for the rich.

We have made people dental-minded, but the modern way of treatment is so complicated and expensive — I think for instance of root-canal treatments — that it proves impossible to supply these treatments in the way they ought to be done, in socialized dentistry.

Notwithstanding the considerable increase of the number of dentists in proportion to the population, the decay of the teeth is steadily IN-creasing instead of DE-creasing, even to such an extent that nowadays practically everybody in our civilized countries suffers, or has suffered, from caries. This fact gives us cause for serious thought and it is our most important duty to try and prevent this.

The caries theory of Professor Miller president of our Society in 1884 and 1885, is still valid: „the only prophylactic remedy that has been found out lately against caries frequency, is the addition of fluor to drinking-water.”

The famous physiologist Professor Donders, whose research-work on metabolism has been translated into fourteen languages, said a century ago: „only on the regulation of the diet upon sound principles does the future of man depend.”

Another famous Dutch physiologist and Nobel-prize winner, Professor Eykman, who died in 1930, that is 75 years later, stressed the same point, he proved the danger caused by degenerated food. He proved that rice, stripped of its pellicle, loses something of the utmost importance which prevents the tropical disease beri-beri. Now, 25 years after Eykman's death, the rice-hulling works are still running and we continue eating devitalized rice.

In an article of March 1955, Dr. Earp Thomas, of Hampton, New Jersey, says: „Good teeth come from good food.” „Comparing the bad teeth of civilized man to the good teeth of the denizens of the jungle, demonstrates a phase of nutritional deficiencies in the United States.” „I cite the cases of these savages only to emphasize that dental caries cannot be wiped out by toothbrush or toothpaste. Civilized food must be revitalized; it must have given back to it the nourishment that is missing.” So far Dr. Thomas.

In my opinion the worst deficiencies in the nourishment of modern mankind are the following:

- 1) the habit of indulging oneself in the eating of sweets has taken frightful, even terrific proportions with civilized people and particularly with children;
- 2) the choice of our food is almost exclusively determined by what we think tasty or by the housewives' love of ease;
- 3) tinned (canned) food is preferred, because it makes the preparation of a meal easier, although it enormously reduces the nutritional value of the meals.

There will be hardly any colleague who does not agree to these three points. As I showed you, during at least a hundred years, the same conclusion is constantly repeated; and what have we done about it up till now? NOTHING!

Well, then, why wouldn't the combined dental organizations, possibly supplemented by food specialists and dietetists, conduct an ambitious campaign against these abuses?

With the help of modern publicity, in the shape of short, powerful talks on radio and television, school talks, and the cooperation of housewives' organizations, supported by the press and magazines, enormous results could be obtained.

And, moreover, why shouldn't we, at the same time, instead of concentrating our attention on the pathological phenomena of caries, study the nutritional behaviour of a people, of which a medical inquiry testified that they possessed a remarkable degree of health; where all the human diseases are practically non-

existent. The people I am alluding to are the Hunzas, a people living in the Karakorum Mountains, a part of the Himalaya.

The Scotch physician, Dr. McCarrison, observed that here, indeed a people has been found possessing the highest degree of public health. The so-called phenomena of old age were lacking; weakening of the organs did not occur. Their hearts did not lose their juvenile elasticity, and they preserved their healthy sets of teeth. At an exceptionally high age, life extinguished peacefully, as a candle burnt dead in the socket.

McCarrison says: „The determinant cause of the exceptional health of the Hunza people is to be found in their food.”

It will be known to you that already numerous expeditions have explored the Himalaya Mountains, expeditions with sporting as well as scientific purposes.

I wonder if our dental organization could not take the initiative to add a medical and dental section to such an expedition on a following occasion, as the Hunza people do not live at a great distance from the objectives of these expeditions.

Perhaps it will even be possible to organize a special health expedition with a view to studying this subject, which is of the greatest importance to public health and the combat of caries.

In this connection I would refer to a recent paragraph in the newspapers, about an expedition of women to the Himalaya Mountains, which was financed by the British „Everest Foundation” and the Indian „Himalaya Club”.

In short, the obvious way to come to a definite combat of caries is, in my opinion, to make a thorough study of the problem I mentioned, not only negatively in the shape of studying the pathology of caries, but also positively, studying the way of living of people with sound teeth, and inducing mankind to change their eating-habits so as to promote the health of their teeth.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I close my remarks, expressing the hope that this meeting will prove to be as successful as the programme promises, and that our Society will continue flourishing and increasing in prosperity year by year.

FÉDÉRATION DENTAIRE INTERNATIONALE

Ter Jaarvergadering van bovengenoemde instelling, die van 14—20 Augustus 1.1. te Kopenhagen plaats had, werd als opvolger van Dr. A. Oliver (Nashville) gekozen tot voorzitter A. Joachim (Brussel).