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Society News

Abstract

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The Symposium, which was conceived, nurtured and presented by Ian Smith, then Senior President, attracted a great deal of attention in the Medical Press — especially in the British Medical Journal which covered the event in two consecutive issues of the magazine. The Symposium was held in the George Square Lecture Theatre and the main participants were, “in order of appearance”, Professor Klein, Dr. Allison, Professor Doll, Dr. Kinlen, Dr. Stuart, Dr. Burkitt, Dr. Bagshawe, Dr. Hamilton Fairley, Professor Alexander, Professor Sir Michael Woodruff, Professor Mathe, Professor Crile and, of course, as general coordinator, Ian Smith.

The list is impressive and yet equally distinguished assemblies occur frequently in the many “Congress Spots” of the world. Why did the R .M.S. Symposium have such a special appeal?

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SOCIETY NEWS

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This can no doubt be accredited to all the willing and enthusiastic volunteers from the general body of the Society who cheerfully acted as chauffeurs, guides and ushers at all stages of the proceedings. As the contributors kept remarking, there was a tremendous atmosphere of interest and, although one obviously hesitates to become too effusive, goodwill throughout the whole event.

Dr. Issels' visit last February was of rather a different genre. He was invited to come to Edinburgh and present his views on the treatment of cancer to the Society. News of his rather controversial beliefs had filtered, mainly through the popular press and television, as far north as Edinburgh, but Dr. Issels appeared to have had few opportunities to present his theories to a scientifically — rather than emotionally — orientated audience.

His visit aroused a fair amount of excitement among the general press but this was played at as low a key as possible in order to avoid all the disasters of sensationalism. Nevertheless, the response from the medical public in Edinburgh (and beyond) was extraordinary. Dr. Issels gave his Address in the George Square Lecture Theatre with closed-circuit television link-ups to two lecture theatres in the Appleton Tower. A total of at least 1,100 people came to hear him.

In his talk Dr. Issels, together with Dr. Gauss, his Senior Registrar, outlined the rationale behind the techniques used in his treatment, with many slides and case histories as illustrations. Nowadays any apologist for a particular type of cancer therapy expects to meet with opposition and argument. This Dr. Issels did indeed encounter, but nonetheless, both he and the Society felt that the original intention of providing a forum for discussion had been accomplished. The Society has now warm memories of Dr. Issels, his wife and his son, and were delighted to make him a member of the Society at the dinner held in his honour after his speech.

On a less exotic, and less costly, plane were the traditional weekly meetings of the Society. Speakers at the Public Business talks and addresses included Professor Hinton, Mr. W. M. McQuillan, Dr. J. F. Munro and Dr. C. Mawdsley, with topics ranging from "Dying" and "Obesity" to "Peripheral Nerve Injuries" and "Parkinsonism". In the summer term came an address to the Society by Professor J. Laurence Pool from Columbia University, New York, the address being reproduced in part in this magazine.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Society there was some criticism of the dearth of Dissertations by members. This was due in part to pressure of time from the more spectacular events and we are glad to note that the 25th Session is providing its proper quota of Dissertations.