

The CHIROPODIST

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Editorial

At the crowded extraordinary general meeting of the Incorporated Society of Chiropodists, which was held on 6th October, the proposals for amalgamating the Society with those other chiropodial organisations that like us are recognised by the Board of Registration of Medical Auxiliaries were adopted by an overwhelming majority. In consequence, the Incorporated Society has gone into voluntary liquidation in the full strength of its power to make way for the new Society of Chiropodists; and this is the last occasion on which this journal will appear as the official organ of the Incorporated Society of Chiropodists. This editorial therefore becomes a valedictory note to those members of the old, Incorporated Society for whom we have acted as a mouthpiece for some thirty years. We know from the many letters we have had from time to time how loyal our readership has been; and we like to think that we, too, have done our best loyally to serve their interests. The old Society has had a long career and has been rightly proud of the traditions it has set up and of its part in building up the prestige which modern chiropody enjoys. It is understandable that while the members wholeheartedly agree to the fusion of all the recognised organisations for the sake of the advancement of the profession, there should yet remain a nostalgic link with the past. And it is right and necessary that old traditions should not be forgotten but preserved as a solid foundation on which to build new things. But that is not to say that we can live in the past; far from it. The past is past and can never be recovered. All registered medical auxiliary chiropodists must now give their complete loyalty to the unified organisation, the Society of Chiropodists.

Much was said and written during the negotiations for amalgamation regarding the enhanced prestige and status that would accrue to medical auxiliary chiropodists by fusion into one society. That, of course, is obvious, and the benefits may be expected to be felt immediately. However, it would be absurd to think that chiropodists can now sit back and enjoy at leisure the fruits of past endeavour. The improved position of the profession will not last of itself. More and better things will now be expected from us by the medical profession, the authorities, and the public. And unless we achieve them stagnation will set in. While professional organisation in itself brings its advantages, the solid prestige which scientific chiropody merits and the rightful place it ought to have in the realm of medicine and public health services can only be obtained through our own hard work. There is no reason, for example, why we should be satisfied with our present standard of chiropodial education. It is true that for some years now it has enjoyed the approbation of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons. But nothing is static in the field of medicine and its auxiliaries. Constant research is bringing new discoveries, new techniques are being evolved. Old ideas are sometimes found to be fallacious and the modern practitioner must keep abreast with the new if he is to serve his noble profession adequately. During the war years there has been an unfortunate but understandable hiatus in chiropodial technical development. The old threads must now be taken up again.

Furthermore, the striking advances that have been made by medicine and surgery in these last few years, many of them as the direct result of the impetus which war always gives to medicine, have to be studied, not only where there is some relation with chiropodial practice but even in the wider sphere. For the chiropodist of to-day cannot afford to take a narrow view of things. If he is to be effective as a medical auxiliary and to co-operate intelligently with the medical profession, he must know the language of the physician and surgeon, so to speak, and be able to provide a genuine collaboration.

It has already been evident that the medical man welcomes such collaboration from a chiropodist who is not only a master of his art but who has also kept abreast with medical progress. The new Society of Chiropodists, and that means every member, must strive to keep abreast of the times. We repeat, a lasting enhanced prestige can only be achieved by hard work, it must be earned.

Great opportunities lie immediately ahead of the Society of Chiropodists. It remains with us to seize them. Better standards of scientific education, a furtherance of research and so on, as we have already indicated, will go a very long way to the realisation of what the chiropodist has in his heart. Then there is the place that chiropody will have in the national health service that the Ministry of Health is anxious to promote. There is a great work to be done in this direction. The modern outlook of the medical profession is to place as heavy an emphasis upon preventive medicine as upon the treatment of actual ills. The chiropodist, too, has a part to play here; and chiropodial attention for children has already been strongly advocated. It is obvious that any comprehensive service that is provided to look after the material wellbeing of schoolchildren must include attention to the feet. When the time comes for the implementation of a comprehensive service, chiropodists must not be tried and found wanting. Industrial medicine, too, is to be extended and made a permanent feature. Many registered medical auxiliary chiropodists have been initiated into this new feature as a result of the Government's decision to establish a chiropodial service in royal ordnance factories. The experience learnt must be utilised to the full in the regularisation of the place chiropody can take in the permanent civilian services yet to be established.

These are just a few general ideas we place before our readers in our farewell to the old, Incorporated Society. We do not pretend that it is the first time we have outlined such a policy. But it is appropriate at this particular juncture to reiterate them as an indication of the vast scheme of work before the new Society. The old Society is not dead. It lives on in spirit in the new Society: and it rests with every member of the new Society to pull his full weight into making these ideas actualities.

Mr. John H. Hanby, F.I.S.CH., President of the Society, presided. The Secretary (Mr. Lionel W. Griffiths) read the notice convening the meeting.

- Mr. E. G. V. Runting said he was very glad to have the opportunity of seconding the Resolution, as he had the profound conviction that it was essential to progress. Mr. R. Warmbath asked whether it was not a fact that the new Society had already been registered and was to all intents and purposes already in existence. Secondly, did the passing by the Meeting of Item of the Resolution involve the acceptance of the new Memorandum and Articles of Association without the meeting being given an opportunity to discuss, dissect and criticise. The Secretary, replying to the first question, said that The Society of Chiropodists, Limited, had not and could not be registered until the Incorporated Society went into voluntary liquidation. The title of the new Society was very similar to their own and the Registrar would not accept an application to register it while their Society was in existence. The President then stated that the passing of the Resolution before the meeting involved the acceptance of the Articles of Association, a copy of which had been sent to every member.
- Mr. Warmbath, having expressed thanks for the clear reply to his questions, said that his personal opinion was against the amalgamation. He had the feeling that the bulk of the members were in favour of it, and his object was not to oppose specifically the amalgamation of the five societies, but to draw the attention of members to some things which he was quite sure they did not know about, namely, the alteration in the rights and privileges which they would or would not enjoy in the new Society. He felt very strongly, and he thought members from the North of England felt very strongly, that an opportunity should have been given to all members to meet together to discuss the reasons for and against amalgamation and to put forward their ideas of what they should seek in the new amalgamation.
- The older members looked forward to seeing new chiropodists being well trained and well educated and far above the standard of some of them, and that they would leave, when they passed out, the profession of chiropody filled with educated, skilled chiropodists.
- The President said that he sometimes wondered if members realised that they were attempting to amalgamate with four other Associations, all possessing their own characteristics and their own sentiments regarding their Associations, whether they be younger and with not so many members as themselves, and the protracted negotiations which had been going on for two and a half years had been a compromise by the representatives of the five Associations. As the oldest and largest pioneering body in this country, it was only natural that they should have to give up most, but they had got to think of what was going to be to the ultimate benefit of the profession. As had been put forward very plainly and in very simple language by Mr. Knapp, of Birmingham, the question was amalgamation or no amalgamation. The rejection of the motion, in his humble opinion, would put back the profession

for another twenty years. That was the situation facing the members, and the decision rested with them. But before they came to a decision, he wanted them to think seriously of what he had said on many occasions when he had spoken upon the matter.

- Never in the history of the profession had they been called upon to take such an important decision as the one before them. He could only give them his own personal conviction, and that was that if they rejected the motion, which one of the founders of the Society had seconded, they would turn back the pages of history of their profession for longer than he liked to think.