Landmarks of 1944

Association Impacts—Past and Present *

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I AM glad to have this opportunity to review the impacts of the Association during the last twenty years. As Treasurer, and as a member of the Executive Board during this period, I have seen our Association grow, improve the character of its services, and increase in power. It has been a fine experience altogether to watch the procession and on occasions to be a part of it. The satisfaction has been all the greater because step by step, I have seen the goals achieved which were outlined by my former chief and predecessor as Treasurer in the Association, Dr. Lee K. Frankel. He was a man of great vision and yet the high ambitions which he had for the Association have proved to be altogether modest.

Thus he always talked in terms of an Association which would be wholly professional in character. Twenty-five years ago, there was a goodly proportion of our limited membership which was far from professional. When in 1922 we adopted the new Constitution and set the requirements for memberships and the high standards for Fellowship, we took a long step toward making the society truly professional. That has increasingly been the policy of the Association throughout the intervening years.

In spite of the higher standards for membership, our Association has grown beyond all expectation. Twenty years ago there was a total of 3,139 Fellows and members. Today, there are almost three times as many, of whom 1,570 are Fellows. I need hardly point out what a change has taken place during these two decades in the development of career service among our members in all the specialties. Nor have we sat idly by, benefiting from the current changes. Rather have we participated in and encouraged all of the steps which have increased the effectiveness of our members. They are not only far more in numbers, but of much higher quality. They are a true reflection of the extraordinary change which has come over the public health movement in the United States during the period.

As Treasurer I must say a word with regard to the finances of our Association. Finances are not always a necessary evil; they can be the very essence of an organization like ours and afford a good index of an association's vitality. Twenty years ago our annual budget was $77,000. This year it is nearly $230,000. We now have 33 Sustaining Members from whom we receive contributions totalling more than $6,000 each year. We have 215 Life

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Members. In 1944, with the fiscal year having four more months to go, membership income has already passed $51,000, which substantially exceeds the total income for the entire year 1923. We now have total net assets in excess of $100,000 safely and profitably invested.

As might be expected under the circumstances, our office organization and facilities have grown. Their development has been commensurate with our increasing resources and our increasing responsibility. It was a good many years before the Association developed a full-time staff and an organization adapted to the task of year-round operation. Twenty years ago, the total number of staff members in the office was 12. Today, under the inspired leadership of Dr. Atwater, we have an extraordinarily effective organization of 42 persons functioning smoothly and effectively. Through the patient and faithful cooperation of our leaders, and especially of our Executive Secretary, the Association is increasingly and favorably known throughout the world.

An excellent index of the vitality of our Association is the number attending our annual meetings. In 1924, there were 894 registered; this year, in spite of every effort to keep the attendance down on account of war restrictions on travel, we have a total of 3,984. In 1924, we had 9 sections; now there are 12. Also in that year there were 3 affiliated societies and branches; now there are 27. Then, the circulation of the Journal was 4,000; now it is over 12,000. The wartime program of this meeting of the Association illustrates very well the greatly broadened scope of the Association. One might profitably compare this program with the one twenty years ago. At the 1924 meeting, our program included 74 papers; this year the number has risen to 209. Twenty years ago, who would have conceived that interest in cancer from the point of view of public health would be sufficient to warrant an all day symposium solely devoted to that subject? Yet this and other equally important new fields are now receiving our constructive consideration.

The figures that I have given you thus far are valuable as quantitative measures of the growth of the Association as a whole. But these numbers fall far short of telling the story, because the significant growth of the Association is in the intangible realm of prestige and standards. The Association has exerted its greatest influence and rendered its most outstanding services primarily through the operations of three standing committees. These are the Committee on Research and Standards, the Committee on Administrative Practice, and the Committee on Professional Education. These committees have made their impress on the whole public health movement. Thus the Committee on Research and Standards has produced and kept up to date, with the aid of the Laboratory Section, such basic reference works as the well known volumes on Standard Methods for Examination of Water and Sewage and for The Examination of Dairy Products. The new edition of the volume on Diagnostic Procedures and Reagents has come through these channels. Many of these procedures have become official with most state and federal health agencies and are literally world-wide in their acceptance, reflecting as they do more than 40 years of work of Association members.

I want particularly to refer to the committee's report on The Control of Communicable Diseases. At this very session we have approved a new edition—the ninth—continuing the series first published under Association auspices in 1916. Since that date, well over 250,000 copies have been distributed. You know that this volume has long been official with the United
States Public Health Service. Some of you heard yesterday a distinguished representative of the British Ministry of Health say:

"Hard pressed as the medical staff of the Ministry of Health is at the present time, Sir Wilson Jameson, our Chief Medical Officer, was so anxious to obtain uniformity as between America and England in the control of infectious disease and to reap the benefit of reciprocal exchange of knowledge between these countries, that he sent two medical officers to New York specially in order to meet the members of your committee responsible for this report, with the view of discussing the differences in epidemiological practice between the two countries. We obtained the views of the Scottish Board of Health, the Board of Education, the Society of Medical Officers of Health, the Association of School Medical Officers, and a large number of experts. . . . In our enquiries in England we were struck not only by the great value attached to this brochure by medical administrators, but also by the wide extent to which it was already used as a guide in the control of communicable disease in our own country." We look forward to the day when this report will also be official in Great Britain and in other countries.

Furthermore, as soon as they receive the final draft of the new report on The Control of Communicable Diseases, translators will immediately begin turning it into Spanish, Portuguese, French, and other languages. Its use will soon cover the world. What a compliment to the Association!

Of equal value has been the work of the Committee on Administrative Practice. I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the appraisal methods developed by the committee have truly revolutionized public health practice in the United States and in some other countries as well. You have heard the review of the work of this committee by Dr. Halverson, the new Chairman. You know that for more than ten years this committee sponsored and directed the Health Conservation Contest and the National Health Honor Roll. These activities have now been recast into a National Reporting Area which will serve even better in the coming days to promote advances in administrative procedures in the various divisions of the official health agencies. At this juncture, it is fortunate that the work of this committee is in the hands of a young and effective state health officer, such as Dr. Halverson. The Executive Board has great confidence in his leadership. Every great step forward in the past was made under such leaders as Winslow, Emerson, Vaughan, Wolman, Bishop, and Leathers. I believe that we have giants today also in such men as Halverson, Shepard, and Maxcy.

The third standing committee I have cited—that on Professional Education—has now published a total of 13 official reports on the education and experience qualifications of public health workers and has half a dozen additional reports maturing toward Association approval. These documents are of inestimable value to civil service and merit system agencies in developing qualifications for appointment and in selecting candidates for positions in public health. Thus, the Association, through this committee, will help to determine the quality of career service in public health for many years to come. The impact of the Association in this respect is particularly felt through its Merit System Unit which prepares examination material for states, to be used for professional personnel. This represents the first source of modern examinations available for the selection of candidates in these fields. Already one hundred examinations have been prepared for 19 states.
The operation of these standing committees involves not only lavish service from the members of the respective committees, but calls for sizable sums of money to cover the necessary expenses of full-time staff members, travel, publication, etc. Grants for the conduct of this most important work have come in generous measure from the Commonwealth Fund, the Kellogg Foundation, the Milbank Memorial Fund, the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, the J. P. Hood Educational Trust, and from some of the larger life insurance companies. I mention this fact not only to pay tribute to the generosity and vision of the directors of these agencies who have seen in the work of the Association something eminently worth while, but also to indicate that the operations of the Association have had their impact on the Foundations in opening up to them new and valuable spheres of interest and activity.

The impact of the Association has not been limited to the Foundations. It has also spread over into the programs and activities of our fellow national organizations, most of which are housed at 1790 Broadway, and are members of the National Health Council. It is difficult to appraise the value of the presence of a professional society like ours in the midst of specialized and largely promotional organizations like the National Tuberculosis Association, the American Social Hygiene Association, the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, and others which are more closely associated with the public than we are. But, in any case, our influence has been altogether good. Our techniques of evaluation of health services, our survey methods, and the standards we have set up for professional service have all of them infiltrated into the daily operations and routines of our neighbors and associates.

And this, I believe, has been a very real contribution to the public health movement in America. In addition, our Association has been a source of strength to the National Health Council itself. Let me mention, for example, one recent project of the Council which stemmed very largely from the deliberations of our own organization. Discussions in our own Executive Committee on the subject of the relationship of voluntary to official health agencies led naturally to the recommendation to the Council that a study be made of the field of voluntary health work. It is a pleasure to announce at this time that after three years' work, a well-considered report is in the hands of the committee which is guiding this effort of the National Health Council. I may say that Dr. Atwater was a mountain of strength in the early planning days when this project was launched. The late Director of the Study, Selskar Gunn, was a former Secretary of our Association and brought to his work the best traditions of our organization. It is sad to think of him so prematurely out of the picture on the eve of the publication of this report. Let us hope that when this document is fully implemented and developed into a constructive national program, the results will prove a monument to this fine public health man.

We have spoken of the conferences between the Association and British representatives which are reflected in the new report on communicable disease control. We have spoken of the steps taken to make available this and other reports for international use through translation and wide publication. There are still other outreACHINGS by the Association into the international field. Professor Winslow has told you of the leadership in the hygiene of housing which has grown out of the activities of his committee during the last eight years. The linkage between this committee of ours and the work of the
Health Organization of the League of Nations is direct and vital. When the day comes again for international collaboration in housing, the Association will be able to report definite progress accomplished here even in wartime. Perhaps this will prove the most significant contribution which the Association has ever made in the hygiene of environment.

The Association is also making its mark internationally in plans for the rehabilitation of war-torn countries abroad. It was seven years ago, when the Association met in New York City, that the Honorable Herbert H. Lehman, then Governor of New York State, set before the Association at its General Session his concepts of professional leadership in public health and how this priceless treasure was to be protected against political manipulation. Today Governor Lehman, as you all know, is serving as the Director General of UNRRA. There he is putting into effect on an international stage the policies and principles which he declared to us in 1937 and which he so signally illustrated in his administration of this state. The Association welcomes the opportunities which have been afforded to it to help in finding the staff required for this gigantic undertaking. In this it has made use of its familiarity with the thousands of workers having special qualifications, and has acted as a clearing house between those who seek such overseas service and the employing agencies.

As other examples of the international impact of this professional society may be cited the expanding contacts with our friends from Latin America. It is now more than 40 years since the Association has officially included Mexico and Cuba in its sphere of interest, but never before has there been such substantial representation of our colleagues from countries to the south as in the last three years when about 200 guests from these countries have attended our annual meetings. We are honored today in their presence at this meeting and in the presence of visitors from Great Britain, from Norway, from China, and from other distant places. Thus we recognize in a tangible way that those things which we have in common are more important than those wherein we differ. Such leadership as that from Dr. de Paula Souza of Brazil, who this year is our Vice-President, illustrates how much we have to gain by recognizing our common needs.

Another new and significant type of our collaboration with our neighbors to the south has been the organization recently within the Association of the Committee on Professional Relations with Latin America, We celebrated Pan American Day last December by issuing, on behalf of the Association, a Health Charter for All the Americas. To this we have received most courteous responses. They must be seen to be appreciated. We have welcomed scores of visitors from Latin America into the Association through Honorary Membership and have sought to meet and assist those who were seeking information and training in North America. Conferences during the year with those well informed on health conditions in this hemisphere lead the committee to believe that the experience of this Association can be valuable to our Latin friends, for organizations like our inclusive society of all types of public health workers are seldom found south of the Rio Grande. We shall ever seek to find new channels of service to them, perhaps implementing in a very real way the services which the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and the Office of the Coordinator of Inter American Affairs offer on an official level. We shall encourage the translation and distribution of our publications. One in particular, Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products, in
Local Health Service

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thought been cable Disease "A New Approach in-\n
duction and also, friends Disease Control." In view of the fact that both of these subjects relate to reports shortly to be published under the auspices of the Association, it has been thought well by Dr. Haven Emerson, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Local Health Service of the Committee on Administrative Practice, and also Chairman of the Committee on Communicable Disease Control, to defer these reports until the definitive manuscripts are available, when their appearance will be announced in the American Journal of Public Health. A volume on Local Health Units for the Nation will shortly be published by the Commonwealth Fund for the Association and the new edition of the report on the Control of Communicable Diseases is about to come from the printer.

strengthened. In the future, I see a much larger and even more powerful organization reflecting the expansion of public health work, both official and voluntary. It is inevitable that increasing numbers of adequately trained health officers, epidemiologists, statisticians, health educators, and others in the field shall join the ranks of our organization. Our function in the future as in the past will be to set standards of practice, to stimulate and direct more adequate training and to serve as a platform for the clarification of ideas and programs. To an increasing degree we must act as the analyst and the constructive critic in our field. If we do these things and if at the same time we continue to serve our fellow national agencies which are in direct contact with the public, we shall be well on the way to our goals of wiping out preventable disease and bringing the health of our people to the highest possible level.

IN addition to the 6 papers in this Symposium which are printed here-