

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF INDUSTRIAL MEDICAL OFFICERS

## FORTY-THIRD MEETING

The forty-third meeting of the Association was held on Friday, March 22, 1946, at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Dr. W. Blood was in the chair.

### *Circulation of Minutes*

The Hon. Secretary reported that the Executive Committee were not in favour of circulating the minutes of each meeting to members, as the expense would be heavy and as a summary was published in the *British Journal of Industrial Medicine*.

### *Nursing Committee*

Dr. Catherine Swanston presented the report of this Committee for the past year. The Committee had been mainly pre-occupied with the training of the industrial nurse, and was hoping to prepare a report on the subject. The following were elected to the Nursing Committee for 1946: Dr. A. J. Amor, Dr. J. G. Billington, Dr. E. H. Capel, Prof. R. E. Lane, Dr. N. G. Marr, Dr. P. Pringle, Dr. Patricia Shaw, Dr. Catherine Swanston.

### *Foreign Relations Committee*

Dr. Donald C. Norris, chairman of the Committee, presented the report for 1945. Contact had been made with the Offices of the Dominions, so that industrial medical officers visiting this country may be invited to meetings of the Association or its Groups. He asked members to let the Hon. Secretary know of any names of people prominent in the field of industrial medicine residing abroad, so that a register could be kept for the use of members proceeding overseas. The possibility of holding an International Congress of Industrial Medicine in this country was being explored. The following members were elected for the current year: Dr. A. J. Amor, Dr. J. C. Bridge, Dr. Elizabeth Bunbury, Dr. W. E. Chiesman, Dr. A. D. Forgie, Dr. Donald Hunter, Dr. G. F. Keatinge, Prof. R. E. Lane, Dr. T. Gwynne Maitland, Dr. E. R. A. Merewether, Dr. M. W. Goldblatt, Dr. Sibyl Horner, Dr. Donald Norris, Dr. P. Pringle, Dr. R. S. F. Schilling.

### *B.M.A. Standing Committee on Industrial Medicine*

The Hon. Secretary was instructed to send a letter, approved by the meeting, to the Secretary of the B.M.A. requesting that that Association set up a Standing Committee in order to deal with the important problems arising in industrial medicine at the present time.

### *B.M.A. Industrial Medical Services Sub-Committee*

The following members were appointed to represent the Association on this Committee: Dr. W. Blood, Dr. C. E. Graves Peirce, Dr. M. W. Goldblatt, Dr. P. Pringle.

### *Public Business*

Dr. H. F. Chard read a paper on the practical treatment of minor industrial injuries. He distinguished between the major type of injury, which involved giving up work, and the much more common minor type,

which could be efficiently dealt with at the factory. The degree to which the industrial medical officer personally undertook treatment depended to a great extent on the compactness of the works under his care. Where these were scattered, he had to rely on his nursing staff, for whom he emphatically advised the laying down of a definite procedure in the matter of treatment. After thorough cleansing of a wound, the dressing should be left undisturbed as far as possible. If a stitch were required—and he preferred stitching to clips or other mechanical device—a little care and thought in the sewing was well repaid in the final result. A plaster slab should be used if there was likely to be tension on the sutures from movements at work. After further review of minor fractures, removal of foreign bodies, tenosynovitis, and foot injuries, he concluded with a brief summary of his own experience of penicillin when used in a works ambulance room.

Dr. F. H. C. Beards followed with a paper on a system for the recording of sickness absence in industry with the object of determining occupational factors of causation. He pointed out that, whilst considerable efforts were made in industry to prevent accidents and to reduce time lost from this cause, yet, in the case of sickness, occupational causes of absence had not yet been satisfactorily differentiated from non-occupational. On the one hand, diseases such as silicosis could not be other than occupational, and on the other it was difficult to assign an environmental aetiology to uterine fibroids. Between these two extremes lay an uncharted area. It was important that more research should be undertaken, since non-occupational causes of sickness should be approached by the general health services of the country, and occupational causes should be tackled by industry itself. The two requisites for dealing with this problem were, first, an adequate system of records, and, secondly, a method of extracting information from them. The basis of the recording system must be the individual sickness absence record so designed that a machine could sort out any possible combinations of the records which might be required. The actual cause of absence should be based on the certificate of the private doctor, but in the case of absences of less than three days the employee's own statement should be relied on. Dr. Beards proceeded to describe in detail the system of investigation which had recently been set up in his own factory. It was too early to assess the results, but he hoped that on a long-term programme an analysis of the figures would indicate groups of workers with an abnormal severity rate of sickness absence which would give grounds for closer investigation into the cause.

By kind permission of Dr. W. S. C. Copeman, who welcomed the Association, the meeting was continued on Saturday, March 23, 1946, at the Rheumatism department of the West London Hospital. Dr. O. Savage spoke on osteo-arthritis in industry. He was followed by Dr. D. Wilson, who described epidemic myalgia, and by Dr. D. Prieskel, who spoke on the social and industrial background to rheumatism. Dr. A. C. Elkin gave a demonstration of treatment of early cases of rheumatic disease. The staff of the hospital showed members modern methods of physical medicine; and in conclusion Dr. W. S. C. Copeman gave a lecture on recent theories of the causation of fibrositis.