Editorials

***Paraplegia*—The International Journal of the Spinal Cord**

The past year has been an exceptionally busy but exciting and vigorous one for the Journal, and it would appear a successful one, as there has been an increasing number of manuscripts submitted for consideration for publication, and the circulation of the Journal has continued to increase steadily over the years, so that now it is higher than it has ever been.

There have been changes in the Editorial Board of the Journal, and in particular Dr Alan Hardy, who has played such a major role in the International Medical Society of Paraplegia, has decided that he is now 'fully retired' and expressed a wish to resign from being an Assistant Editor. I wish to take this opportunity of thanking him very much indeed for all that he has done over the years for the Journal. In his place I am pleased to welcome Mr W. El Masri (UK) who has agreed to become an Assistant Editor. His is very well known nationally and internationally for the work in his own Department and also in other Departments in Oswestry, England in so many different aspects in the field of spinal cord injury and disease. I have invited Dr Takaaki Ikata (Japan) to become an additional Associate Editor, and Dr Fernando Braga (Brazil), Dr H. J. Gerner (FDR) and Dr Avi Ohry (Israel) have joined the Editorial Board. Professor G. W. Hohmann (USA), Dr A. L. Johnson (UK), Professor Ahmed Shafik (Egypt) and Dr T. D. Stewart (USA) have retired from the Board, and I have real pleasure in thanking all of them for their assistance with the Journal.

It is somewhat paradoxical, but success can at times lead to problems; thus there has been a remarkable increase in the number of manuscripts, especially papers of high standard with new ideas and concepts that have been submitted to me for consideration for publication in *Paraplegia*. Indeed there is now a definite, and to me a somewhat disturbing backlog of 'good papers' awaiting publication. After detailed discussions with the President and Council of IMSOP and with our Publishers, as an emergency measure, the number of pages, as readers will have noticed, has been increased to 80 per issue. In addition, at my request, the number of issues per year will be increased from six to nine from February 1990. Obviously this is extremely good news although it will mean much more Editorial work. When in 1980 the number of issues of the Journal increased from four to six, this certainly involved more editorial activity and the even bigger jump from six to nine will have a greater demand on time and effort. I am most keen to attract Editorial Board Members who can spare some of their valuable time for Journal affairs, and in this respect I do try to obtain a reasonable presentation of distinguished individuals in the various 'specialties of Paraplegia', and a reasonable coverage from different geographical areas of the world.

A few issues of the Journal have, as will be known by readers, been mainly edited to a greater degree outwith the UK, and this is proving successful. In December 1988 Dr Douglas Brown dealt with the Australasian issue; in June 1989 Dr Takaaki Ikata is involved with the Japanese issue and in December 1989 Dr David Apple is in charge of a second number of the Journal from the USA. I am most grateful to all of these gentlemen.

One innovation that I have been able to introduce as Editor of our Journal is that of including some international information, and hopefully now that the number of pages and number of issues of the Journal are being increased, I will now be able to introduce several further new ideas. 'We must never stand still!'

The President and Council of IMSOP at my request, kindly agreed to provide funds to purchase a word processor and database facilities for the Journal office in the Royal College

of Surgeons in Edinburgh, and I am most grateful to them. Mr Graham Creasey, FRCS (Edenhall Spinal Unit, Edinburgh) is advising us concerning the 'hardware and software' necessary, and they will be compatible with the computer currently in use at Stoke Mandeville Hospital for IMSOP. As a result many aspects of the work of the Journal Editorial Office in Edinburgh should be facilitated.

Once again I would ask the Heads and Directors of Spinal Centres or Units or Services to kindly submit to me factual information of their facilities, regarding the plans, layouts, facilities—clinical, research, etc., staffing, funding, population served, educational activities, policies, philosophy, etc. so that those interested can learn from others. I would refer to my Editorial on Spinal Paralysis Services in *Paraplegia* 1987, 25:1; and to the article in that same issue of *Paraplegia* on pages 2-5 by Dr W. E. Davies, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

It is with real pleasure that I thank the Members of the Editorial Board, especially my Assistant Editors, referees of papers (and a new list of their names will be published shortly in the Journal), book reviewers, and the Publishers—who are for ever helpful and understanding, and with whom we have a very close relationship, and the President and Council of IMSOP for their support. My thanks go particularly to Mrs Ann Scott, MA, my hardworking, dedicated Editorial Secretary—I could ask for no better!

The International Medical Society of Paraplegia

The Annual General Meeting

This was held in the Merlin Hotel, Perth, Western Australia, on 11 May 1988, with the President, Professor Alain Rossier in the Chair. As usual the Annual General Meeting of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia (IMSOP) had been preceded by a whole day of meetings of the sub-committees of the Society, and of the Council.

The President thanked all those who had assisted him with the activities of the Society in the preceding year. Office bearers: Dr Takaaki Ikata (Japan) was re-elected to the office of Vice President for a period of 2 years. Professor H. Madersbacher (Austria) was elected in place of Dr Conal Wilmot (USA) who remains on the Council as an ex-officio Member. Major General A. S. Chahal (India), Dr H. J. Gerner (FDR), and Dr Avi Ohry (Israel) were re-elected to Council for a further period; and Dr Van Asbek (Holland) and Dr David Apple (USA) were elected in place of Dr R. W. Hussey (USA) and Dr John Yeo (Australia). Sir George Bedrook (Australia), Professor A. Tricot (Belgium) and Dr G. Pool (Holland) were elected Emeritus Members. Dr Eric Moberg (Sweden), in view of his outstanding contributions to the treatment of the paralysed upper limb in man, was elected to Honorary Membership.

Deaths: Mr Isaac Nuseibeh, Honorary Secretary, announced with deep regret the deaths of Dr Ascoli (Italy), Dr Harry Hahn (USA), Dr Ray Jacobs (USA) and Professor Antonio Maglio (Italy).

New members: In his Report Mr Nuseibeh was pleased to announce that the current membership of the Society had now risen to 977.

The Society Medal: This is given annually to a particularly distinguished doctor, and this year it was awarded to Dr Al Jousse, Toronto, Canada, and a Profile of Dr Jousse has been published in the December issue of *Paraplegia*.

The IMSOP newsletter: This is now regularly available for all members.

Mr Brian P. Gardner, the Honorary Treasurer, presented the accounts for the year, and these were approved. Overall the financial situation of the Society remains sound. The Chairman of the Finance Sub-committee, Professor Rossier, had given his Report to

Council, as had Mr Nuseibeh on behalf of Dr Iwatsubo for the Membership Sub-committee, who reported the election of 45 new Members to the Society.

I presented my Editor's Report, and this is set out in this issue of *Paraplegia*.

Dr Paul Dollfus, the Chairman of the Scientific Sub-committee, also provided a detailed report of his Committee's activities during the year, and amongst many other involvements, an excellent Guide for the Organisation and Management of meetings of IMSOP has been produced. A working group has been set up to consider the needs of teaching, prevention, and the treatment of spinal cord lesions in developing countries, and Dr Dollfus stated that he would welcome any information from Members about the needs and existing provisions.

New Paraplegia Societies: An Italian Medical Society of Paraplegia has been formed under the Presidency of Professor Dalle Ore and has had some Meetings. A Scandinavian Medical Society of Paraplegia has been established, with Dr L. Sullivan as its first President. Dr B. Eskesen was thanked for her work in founding this new Society.

Corresponding Secretaries: In place of Professor Giacobini, Professor Mizzau was elected Italian Corresponding Secretary. Dr Edward Carter expressed his willingness to continue as USA Corresponding Secretary, and was duly re-elected.

Future venues and topics for the scientific meetings of the society

- 1989 Rome, Italy, 4-6 May. Organising Chairmen, Professor Giacobini and Dr Von Heland.
- 1990 Tel Aviv, Israel. Organising Chairman, Dr Avi Ohry.
- 1991 Stoke Mandeville, UK, or Vancouver, Canada or the USA.
- 1992 Barcelona, Spain. Organising Chairman Dr Sarrias-Domingo.

Regional scientific meeting of IMSOP

- 1989 Konstancin, Poland, 9-10 May. Organising Chairman, Professor J. Haftek.

Subjects for the Rome meeting:

1. Prevention and treatment of pressure sores.
2. Spasticity.
3. Ageing of spinal man.
4. The role of clinical psychology and counselling in spinal cord injury centres.
5. Proffered papers.

Probable subjects for the Tel Aviv meeting in 1990:

1. Difficulties in the organisation and financing of treatment of patients with spinal cord lesions—including provision of aids and appliances.
2. Para-articular ossification.
3. Spinal cord lesions associated with other impairments.
4. Pain.
5. Changing patterns of incidence of spinal cord lesions.

The Annual Scientific Meeting of IMSOP

This was held in the Merlin Hotel, Perth, Western Australia, 10-12 May 1988. The main subjects for the Meeting were:

1. Methods of assessing neurological regeneration and adaptation after spinal cord injury, including documentaiton and controversial issues.

2. Problems of staffing and care, both in hospital and during extended care, including bowel and urological evaluations.
3. Preventive methods in general with particular reference to early nursing care.
4. 'The Locked-in Syndrome'—communicative problems in total skeletal paralysis.
5. In addition proffered papers were read.

The organisation and the venue, scientific programme and the social activities for this Meeting in Perth, Western Australia, were immaculate, with Sir George Bedbrook leading a most excellent team of organisers and they are to be heartily congratulated for all that they did and achieved. There was a record number of papers presented for an IMSOP meeting, indeed 97 (for example at the Meeting in 1987 of the Society, 44 papers were read); in addition there were 25 poster presentations, and 300 delegates attended from 29 different countries. The Meeting included visits to the superb Spinal Department in the Royal (Perth) Rehabilitation Hospital, which has many innovations, including the unique Quadriplegic Centre. This was a very friendly and highly successful and most enjoyable meeting.

Many glowing tributes were paid to Professor Rossier for his leadership and stewardship of the Society, and this was alluded to by Sir George and I was, unexpectedly, honoured by being asked to give the Toast to the Society and took the opportunity of praising the hard work and ingenuity of its President and Members of Council, and indeed all the Members of the Society who are active in its many pursuits; also the 'people behind the scenes'—the organisers and business staff and did not forget the stoicism and understanding of spouses and in particular wives. Professor Rossier replied in his inimitable way, and handed over to his successor, Dr Edward Carter, Head and Chief Executive Officer, The Texas Institute of Rehabilitation and Research, who thanked Professor Rossier and congratulated him on all that he had achieved for the Society and its work throughout the world.

It is just possible that some of us involved with the Society 'take our Presidents for granted'. This should never be the case, because as a Society we have been particularly fortunate with the choice of Presidents. Each has retained and maintained a very high standard expected of a Society President, and this is well exemplified by Professor Rossier, a distinguished, dedicated and determined leader, who has achieved much in his 4 years as President, including the recruitment of many new members for the Society during his extensive worldwide travels, and has further promoted the many important activities of IMSOP; thus continuing the work of his immediate predecessor, Sir George Bedbrook. He has further organised the Society's affairs, established a defined central office in Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury, Bucks, England, with appropriate secretarial staff and with Mr David Clay as the General Manager. Another important contribution of Professor Rossier is the Swiss Interdevelopmental Fund which achieves so much for the 'developing countries' in the whole field of Paraplegia. Membership and Scientific sub-committees have been further developed; and there is an increase in Corresponding Secretaries, including Italian and Nordic. A closer relationship with the World Health Organisation now exists so that IMSOP is now a Member of the WHO as a non-governmental organisation. Our retiring President exemplified all that is best in a leader and I say here, personally, that as Editor of the Journal of the Society, I will miss these quite frequent long weekend telephone calls from Geneva! I need hardly say that in Dr Edward Carter, our distinguished new President, the Society has someone 'from the New World' who quite quickly will place his stamp on the activities of IMSOP. All of us look forward to working with this Texan with the pawky humour.

Phillip Harris *Editor*