

EDITORIAL

THE first International Congress of Physical Therapy is to take place in London in September of this year, and this is a vital landmark in the history of Physiotherapy. As many people as possible interested in physical medicine should attend this Congress, which, to judge from the elaborate programme, promises to be extraordinarily interesting.

Here is an opportunity for us to gather round and discuss general and particular problems affecting our various countries, and it will surely be proved how important it is that ideas are exchanged, rather than sitting on them at home wondering if they could work. It is the only way to progress by meeting and absorbing the best from all our different worlds.

However, it seems that unless the pall of apathy hanging over physical medicine in this country is lifted, South Africa will be making no contribution at all. We more than keep up with other countries in many other

fields of science. Why must our particular interest be so unproductive?

Perhaps it is because the people who have not seen physical medicine at work overseas can have no idea of its potentialities and in this instance one refers particularly to the medical profession outside our own particular sphere. But we must educate them, and that can only be done by constant proof of our abilities, a fact which will be purely mythical unless we bother to read contemporary literature on our subject, to interest ourselves in new methods of treatment, and to shake ourselves out of the uninspiring rut of routine methods which may or may not give our patients the greatest benefit.

We are not all in that rut, but far too many are. South Africa, with its wealth of material, should hold a prime place as a contributor in the development of physiotherapy, but at the moment she seems to be sadly unaware of this, which reflects a disinterestedness which she should be ashamed to admit.

Postgraduate Course, March, 1953.

This Course was on "Orthopaedics" and had the largest attendance of any Postgraduate Course to date, there being over sixty postgraduates present. This was extremely encouraging, and proves that the trouble taken by the organisers of these Courses is well rewarded, and we hope they are now a regular feature in our lives.

On Friday, March 13th, Mr. J. Edelstein, Senior Orthopaedic Surgeon of the Johannesburg Hospital, gave a most interesting and informative lecture on "The Acrylic Head." He prefaced his subject with the fascinating story of the various forms of hip arthroplasty which have been tried, culminating in the use of the acrylic head of the femur, which to date seems the most satisfactory way of creating a virtually new hip joint.

He demonstrated three cases upon which he had operated, and they were proof of the essential co-operation which must exist between the orthopaedic specialist and the physiotherapist if the patient is to receive the full benefit of the surgeon's skill.

The whole of the next morning, Saturday, was taken up by a lecture on "Backs," given by Mr. C. E. Allan, a Bloemfontein Orthopaedic Surgeon, and the discussion that this provoked. He gave a stimulating talk, illustrating his points by most interesting graphs of the analysis of the muscle work involved in the back when movement takes place. Mr. Allan has done a vast amount of research on this subject, and we were extremely grateful for the way in which he shared his findings with us, and for the advice he gave us about treatment.

On Saturday afternoon, his brother Mr. A. L. Allan, who is a neuro-surgeon in Johannesburg, talked to us about the "Cervical Syndrome." His lecture was most authoritative, particularly in that he firmly believes that the true cervical lesion is a rarity, and that practically all the symptoms

of the "Cervical Syndrome" are caused by the projection of osteophytes into the intervertebral foramina, a theory that is fast being accepted throughout the world. He stimulated us by refuting some of our most commonly accepted forms of treatment, and we went from his lecture with a number of most important ideas passed on to us.

After tea, Miss G. Wilson, of the University of the Witwatersrand Physiotherapy staff, conducted a very interesting and enlightening demonstration of exercises as used in back classes for spinal fractures at various stages, and for cases of spondylitis. The physiotherapy students of the University acted as patients, and a very fine display they gave. We all had our ideas refreshed by this demonstration, and this practical side of the Course proved very popular.

Miss Blair demonstrated the use of Mrs. Guthrie Smith's latest invention, the Bed-chair, a most ingenious and useful piece of apparatus which could well be adopted for very many patients. We look forward to seeing this Bed-chair in common use in South Africa.

Mr. A. Rothberg closed the Course most ably, by thanking the lecturers and organisers, thus expressing the views of all of us about a Course which was one of the most stimulating and informative that we have had.

In the evening Miss Susie Oosthuizen went to a great deal of trouble to provide a braai vleis at her farm Tussenkoppies, which now houses the "Avalon" Rehabilitation Centre. Whether because of the rain, or because of general apathy, this was poorly attended, though those of us who were there thoroughly enjoyed ourselves eating, drinking and making merry, and meeting the "Avalon" patients. Our thanks to Medical Distributors for so generously helping us with the catering expenses.

We can only look forward with confidence to the next Course.