

EDITORIAL

THE International Medical Society of Paraplegia, through its Council and at its Annual General Meeting held in Beerbergen, Holland in June 1980, did me the very great honour of electing me to the high position of Editor-in-Chief of 'Paraplegia', the official Journal of the Society. I am most appreciative of this distinction and thanked the President, Council and Members of the Society at that Meeting, and do so now, publicly, in the Journal. One is aware of the great distinction that has been accorded to me and, at the same time I am fully cognisant of the vast responsibilities and duties that I have undertaken.

I wish to take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to Sir Ludwig Guttmann, one of the most distinguished pioneers in the whole field of Paraplegia. He was one of my mentors in this field, indeed from 1945 (35 years ago!) when the National Spinal Injuries Centre was established. My wife and I were privileged to have him and his late dear wife as close friends. Sir Ludwig founded the International Medical Society of Paraplegia, and also initiated and became the first Editor of its Journal, and continued as Editor-in-Chief until his death on the 18th March 1980.

The 'monument' to this distinguished man has been constructed, during his life time, by his works and example, his teachings, the famous centre for Spinal Injuries at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in England, and by the pupils he attracted and trained, many of whom in fact have themselves established Spinal Centres in several parts of the world. We published a tribute to him in the May 1980 Number of 'Paraplegia' (copies of this issue are still available). In the inside cover of the Journal will be printed 'Founded by Sir Ludwig Guttmann'. The love and devotion of his patients, to me, the real mark and test of any doctor, were very well exemplified in the case of Ludwig Guttmann. During the 1980 Olympics for the Disabled in Holland, it was announced that the Dutch Bulb Growers Association decided to name a new tulip, deep red in colour, after Sir Ludwig Guttmann.

Times change, we change, world events change, medicine is constantly evolving and developing. To stay still is to stagnate. We require to keep abreast of all significant new ideas and developments in the whole field of paraplegia, a specialty which involves so many different disciplines and specialists in medicine and in the allied health professions. The I.M.S.P. is a unique scientific body, attracting doctors from almost all countries of the world. This Journal is the Official Organ of the I.M.S.P., and it will include information concerning the main activities of the Society. It is now published every two months, and we are fortunate in having Longman Group Ltd., England, as our Publishers. It is my intention to maintain the closest possible personal working relationship with the Publishers. We have a serious, challenging, fascinating task ahead of us. I do not intend to make any immediate significant changes in the format and activities and services of our Journal, but I have been given 'the powers of an Editor-in-Chief', and changes will be made. Several of the distinguished Members of the Editorial Board are now retired from active practice, and some have indicated their desire to demit office and to make way for others. Their service and invaluable help over the years is greatly appreciated. In brief, my plan for the future, as I said at the Annual General Meeting of the I.M.S.P. in Holland in 1980, is to have an Editorial Board on an International basis, consisting of several senior doctors actively

working in the field of paraplegia; some members appointed on a geographical, and a specialty basis, in the many and varied specialties that make up 'paraplegia'; and in addition, I feel that other specialists, who may, or may not be Members of the I.M.S.P., and who may, or may not be medical doctors, should be invited on to the Editorial Board. This would be for their expertise in such important areas as anatomy, physiology, pathology, pharmacology, biomedical engineering, statistics, genetics, etc., pertaining to 'paraplegia'. I would say that there is no better example in medicine than in 'the specialty of paraplegia' to demonstrate something that I feel so strongly about, namely 'the holistic approach to medicine', by which I imply the prevention, diagnosis, investigation, management and rehabilitation (social, educational and employment) of what may be referred to, in general, as 'paraplegia' or 'spinal paralysis', whether this is congenital or acquired, and whether due to trauma or to disease.

It was agreed that the Proceedings of the Annual Scientific Meeting, including some of the discussions (although on the whole excellent and with many very important contributions), cannot in the future be published automatically in entirety in our Journal. One simple and practical reason for this is that we do not have sufficient space. This is well demonstrated by the fact that the Proceedings from the July 1979 Meeting in Mulhouse, in France, are still being published up to the October and probably the December 1980 numbers! However, the authors of future papers need have no concern; they will be clearly informed about the important details of these matters in the near future. Most of the papers of future Scientific Meetings of the I.M.S.P. will be published in full, some if agreed to by the authors will be published in summary form. We have a small back-log of important accepted 'original papers' awaiting publication, and I am very keen that these should be published as soon as possible for the sake of the authors and of the readers.

It is a very real pleasure to thank Miss Joan Scruton, M.B.E., for her most excellent and devoted work as the first Secretary to the Journal, and I wish to congratulate her on being elected Director and Secretary General of the British Paraplegic Sports Association, and of the Sports complex at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. I also wish to thank Mrs Kate Lambrechts who over the past several years has acted as Sir Ludwig's Journal Secretary. My thanks are extended to Mr Jim Cosbie Ross, who was Co-Assistant Editor with me, and who has indeed agreed to continue as the associate Editor. Also to thank Dr Hans Frankel, the Honorary Secretary of the I.M.S.P., and all of the other Members of the Editorial Board. In addition I wish personally, on behalf of all of the Members of the I.M.S.P., to acknowledge the very great help and advice and encouragement that we have received from the staff of Longman Group Ltd., our Publishers since the inception of our Journal.

I look forward to working with my colleagues of the I.M.S.P., and know that the new Editorial Board will provide me with practical and forward-looking ideas and plans. My aim is to have a modern, scientifically excellent, attractively produced Editorial Journal.

'Where there is no vision the people will perish' (Proverbs XXIX, 18)

PHILLIP HARRIS
Editor-in-Chief