

to office.

The members of the House Committee will be nominated by the Federal Executive in due course. The election of State Chairman is, of course, the prerogative of the members in the several States.

6. Presentation to the Retiring President

The new President, Dr. E. Gandevia, assumed office forthwith. He expressed his sense of the honour done him in his election and his relief at finding himself provided with a capable Federal Secretary. His first official act was to present a suitably-engraved mug, on behalf of all members of the Society, to the retiring President, Dr. S.V. Marshall.

7. Address by the Retiring President

Dr. S.V. Marshall then delivered the Retiring President's address. He reviewed the events of the 18 months since the last General Meeting, months in which the Society had made steady progress, especially in implementing the policy laid down in Brisbane in May, 1950.

The chief development in 1951-52 was the establishment of our Headquarters in Melbourne. The building was taken over in a state of thorough renovation and adaptation to its new purpose. The Society occupies, at a token rental, the whole of the ground floor, which gives space for a wide range of amenities.

The new Centre was opened on March 5th, 1951 by Professor R.R. MacIntosh, Nuffield Professor of Anaesthetics in the University of Oxford. With its lecture-room, library, museum, laboratory, workshop, darkroom and office, it is certainly unique in this country. Other medical groups, such as the Section of Aviation Medicine, B.M.A., and the Cardiological Group of Victoria, have found our Headquarters, convenient: they have met in them and have thus established a pleasant and useful liaison with ourselves.

Substantial improvements have been made in the furnishing, equipment and amenities at the Centre, largely by unselfish voluntary effort, aided by funds subscribed in response to the appeal made by Dr. A.W. Robertson during his presidency. Much more will be done as finances permit, but the present result is gratifying. We are indebted to the members of the Victorian Section for their practical and financial help to the Centre. They have argued that, since they derive most immediate benefit from it, they should pay more towards its upkeep; each has therefore paid an annual levy for the purpose.

It behoves members in other States to consider ways by which they too might contribute to the welfare and functions of the Centre. Monetary and other gifts will always be welcome, whilst unwanted books and apparatus are always worthy of reference to the curator. But the most valuable of contributions from interstate members would be

material for inclusion in the monthly newsletters. Both secretaries and individual members of State Sections are asked to send copies of all papers delivered before their respective Sections, as well as case reports, accounts of mishaps and description of new apparatus. All such material will, where necessary, be treated as confidential and be modified accordingly.

The newsletters have earned favourable comment both here and abroad, and they represent a powerful element of cohesion within the Society. The burden of their production must be shared between interstate and Victorian members. One way to ensure this would be to impose an all-round levy of an extra guinea per year. It would thus be made possible to employ at least part-time secretarial help at the Centre. It is therefore suggested that the annual subscription for ordinary membership should be raised to at least four guineas.

The President then dealt with the withdrawal of the Society from its position as a Federal Special Group of the B.M.A. Affiliation was obtained for political reasons in 1947, it being felt that the Society was not strong enough to fight the battle of nationalization alone. This threat never materialized. Later, it became apparent that our close liaison with the B.M.A. was likely to restrict our freedom in various ways, notably as regards our proposed Headquarters. The decision to seek disaffiliation was therefore reached at our meeting at Brisbane in 1950 and was confirmed at Sydney in 1951. This action necessitated a small alteration in our Constitution. The matter was submitted to referendum of our members and disaffiliation was carried by 56 votes to 1. In due course, the Federal Council of the B.M.A. accorded us our freedom, whilst expressing regret that we should wish to leave them. We have not, however, really broken away from the B.M.A., since an essential requirement for ordinary membership in our Society is membership of that Association.

Disaffiliation gave us a clear hand, with readier powers of decision and action. In New South Wales, for example, it enabled the local Section to negotiate an agreement with the various Insurance Companies to cover specialist anaesthetic fees in cases of Workers' Compensation. This was a matter which had previously caused dissatisfaction in New South Wales, since the B.M.A. seemed impervious to all suggestions that specialist anaesthetists receive adequate remuneration for their services. The representatives of the Insurance Companies were found to be sympathetic and co-operative, so that a simple and effective agreement was reached. It came into force on Nov. 1st, 1951, and has operated most satisfactorily. Under it, a specialist anaesthetist is defined as being "either a member of the Australian Society of Anaesthetists or one who is recognised as a specialist anaesthetist by the Committee of the New South Wales Section of the A.S.A." Thus, membership in the Society has achieved special significance, at least in New South Wales. In revising our Constitution, the inclusion of definite qualifications for full membership has now become imperative.

In 1951, correspondence was held with authorities in Brisbane

including the State Minister for Health, regarding the apparently degraded status of visiting anaesthetists at the Brisbane General Hospital. Despite their professional standing and the responsible nature of their services, these officers were classified in Junior Grade II, the lowest category applicable to part-time officers and one seemingly more appropriate to recent graduates and new appointees. The authorities have seemingly taken the view, which has some administrative logic, that promotion ought to depend upon possession of higher qualifications. Time will show if this supposition is correct, since an increasing number of diplomas in anaesthetics is now being acquired by our Queensland members. Meanwhile, there is satisfaction in the fact that responsible persons in Brisbane have been informed as to the views of anaesthetists and the importance of their speciality

Again during 1951, our Society was invited by Dr. Marcel Thalheimer, treasurer of the French Society of Anaesthesia & Analgesia, to join in the formation of an International Society of Anaesthetists. Concurrently, a letter arrived from Dr. Geoffrey Organe, honorary secretary of the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland, enclosing a copy of the reply of his president, Dr. W. Alexand Low, to Dr. Thalheimer's proposals. Copies of these letters and a translation of Dr. Thalheimer's proposals were at once circulated to all State Chairmen. Much doubt was felt about the proposed Society, its very wide range of scientific interests, and the risk that it might be dominated by surgeons to the detriment of anaesthetists. Our official view was, therefore, that we did not favour the proposal, but rather supported the British plan of an international Society, under the control of specialist anaesthetists.

Meanwhile, Dr. Frank Leventhal was in Britain, engaged in the comprehensive programme of work and study arranged for him by the A.A.G.B. & I. He represented our Society officially at the congress held in London by the International Anaesthesia Research Society and other bodies, in September, 1951. He also watched our interests at the international Congress of Anaesthetists in Paris, a fortnight later, at which the proposed International Society was discussed. He reported that the delegates of Britain, America, the Dominions and most Continental countries were not in favour of the original French plan. The outcome was a modified scheme, a federation of National Societies with an international Executive Council composed of anaesthetists. This council hopes to hold its first International Congress in 1954.

The President now went on to report a less creditable, though an amusing, example of international liaison. In 1950, a Dr. J. L. Avellana, describing himself as the President of the Cuban Society of Anaesthesiology, forwarded a proposal for liaison between his organization and ours. He sent out three handsome diplomas of honorary membership in his Society, for presentation to Dr. A.W. Robertson (as our then President) Dr. John Barker (as Secretary) and the

speaker (as Vice-President). He also submitted the names of three of his people, Drs. Garcia Gamboa, Guillermina Olite and himself, with the suggestion that our Society should accord them reciprocal honours. When it was found that Professor MacIntosh, then in Sydney, had been similarly honoured, the bona-fides of our Cuban friend seemed to be amply confirmed. We therefore asked Professor MacIntosh formally to present the new diplomas, which he did with becoming gravity at our last General Meeting. We, in turn, duly admitted the Cuban nominees to honorary membership in our Society.

During ensuing months, peremptory demands for photographs and biographical data, required for inclusion in a directory of anaesthesiologists, came from Dr. Avellanal. He also demanded that we expunge the name of Dr. Olite from our honorary membership and substitute another. Further, he had transferred his domicile to Mexico City; finally, mail addressed to him in Cuba began to return to us. Suspicion was thus aroused: information from various sources has since indicated that the Cuban Society of Anaesthesiology has no official standing and is not recognised by the National Medical College of Cuba. It has therefore become expedient to terminate liaison with the Cuban Society of Anaesthesiology and Dr. Avellanal has been notified accordingly. In the absence of any suitable explanation from him, it is recommended that liaison be terminated forthwith.

The President then said that the formation of a Faculty of Anaesthetists within the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons was an event of great significance to our Society and to ourselves. Such recognition by the College of anaesthetists is to be applauded. It is hoped that the new body and the Society will work in advantageous co-operation. Each organisation will have useful spheres of activity; neither need usurp the functions of the other. It should not be supposed, however, that the two bodies are identical or represent duplication of authority or effort: they are both independent and interdependent. It would seem appropriate for the Faculty to become an examining body and to administer an Australasian diploma in anaesthetics. The Society would then undertake the postgraduate education of anaesthetists and prepare candidates for the above-mentioned examination. It would also deal with the social, political and professional interests of its members. The two bodies might usefully combine in scientific meetings and, later, in the publication of a journal.

The President drew attention to the need for revision of the Society's Constitution. Much thought and work have gone towards this in the past two years. The Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose in Brisbane in 1950 has submitted a draft for a new Constitution and By-Laws. The draft aims at preserving State rights and giving a high degree of local autonomy to State Sections. The practicability of

this draft must depend, however, upon legal opinion. As an actual and prospective owner of property in Victoria, the Society might best be registered as a Limited Company in that State. Alternatively, it might be envisaged as a group of autonomous State Societies, these becoming affiliated in an Australian, or an Australasian, Society of Anaesthetists.

In conclusion, the President expressed appreciation of the honour done him in his election to office 18 months before. He congratulated his successor, Dr. Eric Gandevia, and envisaged under his control a period of enduring progress for the Society.

8. General Meeting, 1953.

It was announced that the General Meeting of 1953 would be held in Adelaide, at a date to be announced later by the Executive. In view of the strong possibility of overseas representation, premature announcement of the date would be ill-advised.

9. The New Constitution.

The Federal Secretary (Dr. J.M. Bell, V.) was desired to explain the steps which have been taken to reform the Constitution. He said that the Society has operated, thus far, under a Constitution formed in 1935 and revised in 1948. Since the Society now owns property and engages in a wider range of scientific activity than ever before, its Constitution has become unrealistic. A new one must therefore be drafted and much of the necessary work has been done in committee. Eventually, the final draft will need to be submitted to referendum of all members. In the meanwhile, a rough draft embodying the wishes of the Society, as they now appear, has been formulated for submission to the lawyers. When they have cast it into legal form, it will be made available to State Sections to be discussed before it comes to eventual referendum.

The Society has assets: these may be vested either in trustees or in a registered Company. It is unfair to ask trustees to accept a responsibility of such magnitude. If, then, a Company be formed, it must be registered in Victoria, because its headquarters are in that State. Such registration, according to the lawyers, would not compel the Society to hold its Annual Meetings in Victoria: they could be held in any capital city of Australia at which the Society has a branch. The Society, with its State Sections, in fact presents quite a close analogy to the Institute of Accountants, which has State organizations and a Federal executive and which conducts its Annual Meeting at whichever capital city it chooses.

As a Company, the Society could retain its State Sections, which would elect representatives to the Federal Executive pro-rata to the