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## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

I come before you today with a deep feeling of gratitude and appreciation. The honor of having been elected and having served as your President during the past twelve months, has been a joy and a privilege that I will long cherish and remember. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my Committees who have worked so hard and cooperated so well during this period of time. Especially do I want to commend the Program Committee, Drs. Stuart Ross, W. C. Bernstein, Karl Zimmerman and our Secretary, W. W. Green, who are to be congratulated for an outstanding group of papers. I am also particularly indebted to the Committee on Arrangements and Entertainment, Drs. M. Browne Holoman, Frank H. Murray, Harry Bacon and W. J. Burkett, who have contributed so much of their time toward making this meeting so pleasant and successful.

Following Dr. Harry Bacon and Dr. Louis Moon as President places me in a rather strange position this year. Dr. Bacon, in his address, discussed the National and International Responsibilities of our Society. Dr. Moon, last year discussed The Past, the Present and the Future. Therefore this leaves very little for me to discuss. So at the risk of being unorthodox, I am going to deviate from the past practice and confine my remarks to a few matters that have stood out to me as President concerning which I would like to make certain recommendations.

First of all, I have felt the need for, and have appointed for the first time, a Military Affairs Committee which probably should be made one of our Standing Committees since it looks as if war, like the poor, will always be with us. The function of this committee will be to influence the placement of our members who are called to military service, into assignments of duty where they may continue to apply their specialized knowledge of proctology. To place these men in branches of medical service foreign to their fields of endeavor and special training is not only unfair to them but it is also wasteful of their talents, and results in reducing the quality of medical care rendered to the armed services, to the degree that this practice is followed.

Second, I would like to suggest that the Society meet one year independently of the American Medical Association. It was done many years ago and a good attendance was reported. I recommend that we give careful consideration to the matter of trying it again and of holding our regular annual meeting at a time and place other than the time and place of the meeting of the A.M.A. It is my feeling that our meetings suffer somewhat as a result of dividing our interest between the A.M.A. meeting and our own. As things are at present, we usually find ourselves in a hurry to get out of the way of the A.M.A. meeting. So I feel that it would be a worth while experiment to hold our meeting apart from any other meeting and see what kind of program and volume of attendance we would have.

Third, I recommend that the Secretary adhere to the specified rule as set forth in Article X, Section II, of the By-laws of our Society, as follows: "Any Fellow, Associate Fellow or Affiliate who shall absent himself from two consecutive annual meetings shall be reminded of such absences by the Secretary. If he shall then absent himself from the next meeting without furnishing to the Executive Council satisfactory reasons for any absences, his name shall be stricken from the membership roster."

Now, I am going to discuss a matter that I have been thinking about for some time. I believe this Association has passed the point where it should be a mutual admiration Society, but on the contrary that it should be an organization made up of men who have been trained in Proctology and who are engaged in the ethical practice of this specialty. In the past, we have been more or less a closed corporation, composed of members who were supposed to like each other personally. In other words, we in the Society should cease to be selfish and should think in terms of our specialty and its Board, and the Society as a whole.

The following is not only my opinion, but is that of others. The Constitution and By-laws should be flexible concerning teaching positions in class "A" Medical Schools: I quote Article V, Section III. (b) of the By-laws, "A teacher of proctology in a Class 'A' Medical School may be elected to Fellow membership without having fulfilled any of the above requirements provided he has been certified by the American Board of Proctology or the American Board of Surgery, and has been nominated by a unanimous vote of the Executive Council." I think that on this basis, Fellowship should be granted only to those of professorial status, including assistant, associate and full professorship.

As the By-laws now stand a man who is an assistant instructor in a medical school is eligible for a short cut to fellowship, whereas a man, because he is not near a teaching institution but who may be better qualified than the man mentioned above is penalized and is not eligible for Fellowship. Certainly this is not fair to an excellent man who may not be located near a teaching institution. We must realize that with the number of members and the growth of our Society, we are weakening ourselves structurally, and what we need is quality rather than quantity. Let me remind you again that we need more training facilities and more teachers. However, if the American Board of Proctology certifies men as competent proctologists and then our Society states that they are not eligible for Fellowship, I think we, the Society, are doing the applicant as well as ourselves an injustice.

We are unfortunate in having two categories for certification by the American Board. The number of men passing the examination in Anorectal Surgery is a much larger group than the Proctology group, and it is my feeling that all men who are certified in either category should become eligible for Fellowship in the Society. In this regard, it has come to my attention from several sources that our Board Specifications, though fine, may endanger our specialty by their rigidity. This is to say, it is quite likely that some of those who seek training in this field will hesitate because of the five-year period required, and will turn to some other method of acquiring partial training. This holds not only for proctology but for other fields as well.

Finally, I am of the opinion that we have a group of younger men who are capable and who would take a greater interest in the Society if only given a chance. They should be encouraged by the older members who have had their day. In fact, I believe that the older man should sit on the side lines and watch the young army come along. He can then reminisce and say to himself, "I was once there myself."

HONT R. ALLEN, M.D.