ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

YOUR PRESIDENT and the officers of the Canadian Anaesthetists' Society take great pleasure in welcoming here tonight this large number of anaesthetists and their wives as well as all those others who have been good enough to honour us with their presence at our annual banquet.

I do not intend to speak to you of the first anaesthetic discoveries, of which you are all aware, but those of you who began about thirty years ago remember the meagre resources we had at our disposal during that period. You know how much courage and self-possession were necessary to undertake the sometimes risky operations with nothing but a simple mask and substances requiring delicate handling. Oxygen, solutions, transfusions, and other resuscitation procedures were not in current and preventive use and could not be obtained except in extremely dramatic and often desperate circumstances.

The anaesthetists of that time practised an art rather than a science, as is made evident by a glance at the number of volumes published then which were entitled "The Art of Anaesthesia." One had to be content with very general medical knowledge because textbooks on anaesthesia were scarce and elementary. Constant observation of the patient, the known indications of the degree of anaesthesia, and the fruits of long and precious experience supplemented the scientific refinement of anaesthetists.

As the years went by, we witnessed the discovery of more powerful gases, handy barbiturates, extremely precious curares, simplified methods of transfusion, potentialized anaesthetics with controllable hibernation, more and more varied and perfected equipment, and the manipulation of all these products and instruments requires an increasingly thorough and broad knowledge on the part of the anaesthetist.

The rapid evolution of the teaching of anaesthesia came about in Canada thanks to a few pioneers who helped the earlier anaesthetists to profit by their clinical experience, thanks to our universities which put their scientists and laboratories at our disposal in order to teach basic sciences and experimental medicine; and thanks also to our hospitals which furnished us with material that was extremely precious in the practical application of the teaching of theory.

As you see, the anaesthetists of Canada proved equal to the task since they have succeeded in training a great number of competent anaesthesists to answer the needs of our hospitals, and furthermore, several of our former students have been called abroad to fill important appointments in teaching and organizing departments of anaesthesia in those regions where this specialty was not yet making much progress.

Because of the success of Canadians abroad and the prestige of some of our own members, the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists will hold its next congress in Toronto in 1960 and has honoured one of our members by electing him president. I, therefore, take advantage of this opportunity to solicit

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your complete collaboration to make this congress a success, and I urge those who will get the chance to go to Scotland this summer to extend a cordial invitation to our European colleagues. This will be an excellent occasion to show foreigners that an exchange of ideas between two ethnic groups of different language and culture has been a source of scientific enrichment for our anaesthetists.

Without wishing to prolong this address, I should like to call to mind Dr. Roméo Rochette. His death has caused deep regrets and has deprived our Society of a devoted servant. He was a constant, active participant in all our congresses and was one of the pioneers of anaesthesia in French Canada. All those who knew him remember him as a faithful servant and a perfect gentleman. Let us extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Rochette.

We have also heard with great sorrow of Dr. F. H. Wilkinson's death, formerly Chief of the Anaesthesia Department of the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal. He has been an active member of our Society and was a former president of the Quebec Division. Two other members from our Province, Dr. R. Laurendeau and Dr. A. Legendre, have passed away during the past year.

In conclusion, I should like to thank all the executive members for their excellent spirit of collaboration and also our devoted secretary, Dr. R. A. Gordon, and his daily helpmate, Miss E. R. Campbell. I should also like to express my gratitude to the eminent lecturers for presenting papers of great scientific value, to the chairmen of the sessions, to the various committee members who worked behind the scenes, and to all those who took active part in the discussions. Last but not least, we must not forget the exhibitors who gave valuable assistance, the authorities of the Seigniory Club, the personnel, all members of the Society who participated in this congress, and all those far and near who have contributed to the progress of our Society.

Now it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you the man whom you have so ably chosen to direct the destiny of our Society in the course of this coming year. His numerous publications, his spirit of organization, and his aptitude for teaching have made us appreciate him. He has successfully fulfilled various functions in our Society and is also Professor of Anaesthesia at the University of Alberta. His past, his experience, and his thorough knowledge of the functioning of our Society guarantee the effective administration of our association.

Without further ado, I have the honour to introduce your new President, Dr. E. A. Gam, from Edmonton, Alberta.

EUGÈNE ALLARD, M.D.