

## STUDENTS' MEDICAL COUNCIL. PRESIDENTIAL REPORT.

SIDNEY L. KARK.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with pleasure that I submit my annual report for your approval to-day; a pleasure because I feel that there is not a person interested in student activities who will disagree with me when I say that the year 1935 was one in which enormous strides were taken in almost every sphere of student organisation at the Medical School. Allow me to sketch briefly our activities for the past year and discuss the lessons which we can learn from our errors.

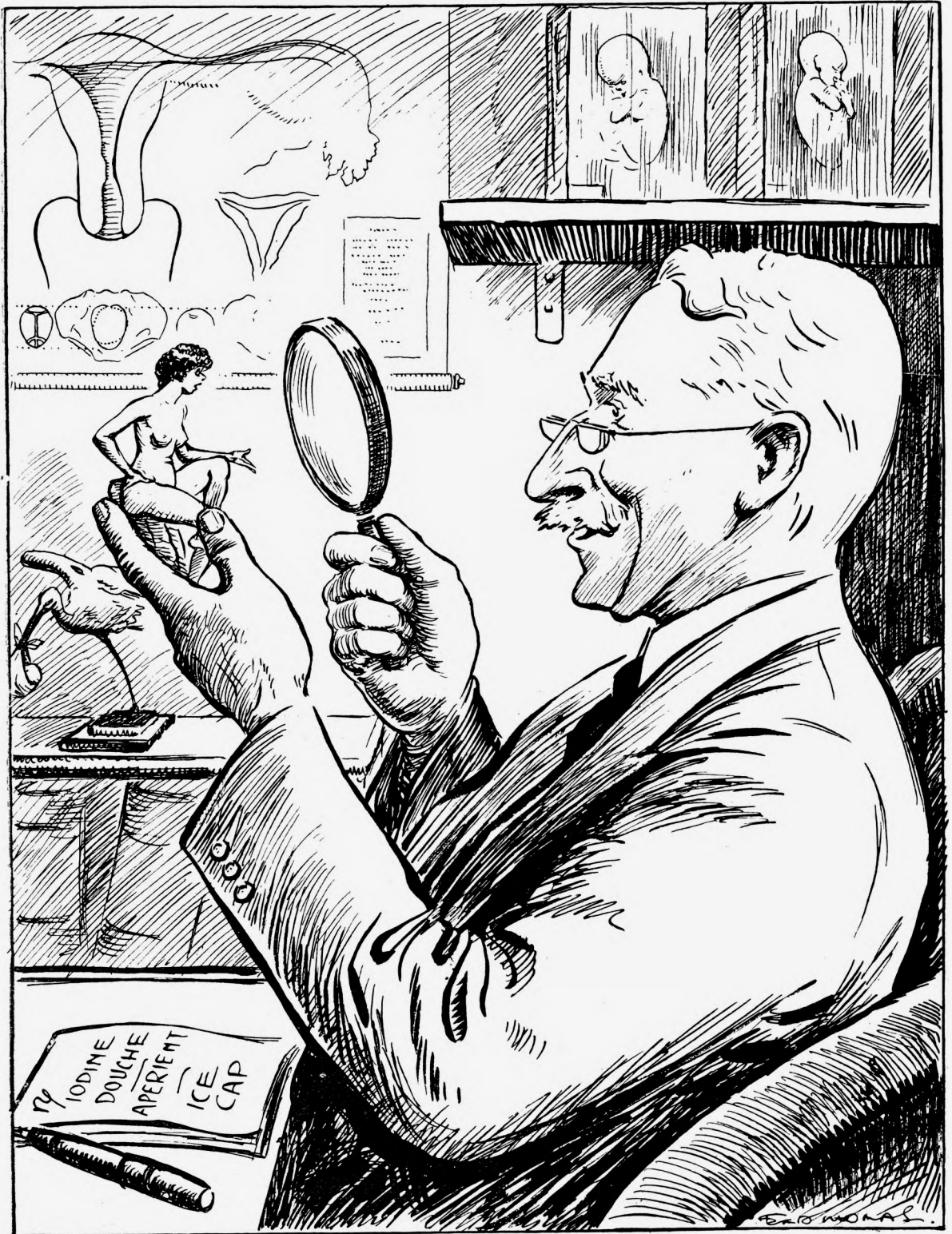
*Finance.* The strict control over finances which our Finance Committee maintained in spite of opposition has yielded the results which it forecasted. Our Treasury is to-day in a better state than I have known it to be for the last five years. In my semi-annual report of last year I expressed the opinion that our relations with the S.R.C. seemed at long last to be nearing settlement. Those remarks were greeted with amusement by not a few persons, and I myself at times became more doubtful of their truth than the scoffers themselves. However, our persistent demands have now been met. The S.R.C. at their last meeting of the year agreed unanimously to grant our Council an annual sum of £100 to be administered by ourselves. Any profits which we may make need not be paid into the S.R.C. coffers, for that Council agreed that our Faculty organisation was one which needed a certain amount of independence and has therefore granted us leave to use these monies as we deem fit. It is not so much the £100 which we fought for but the principle involved, that is of significance. It is our duty henceforth to demonstrate in no mistakable fashion that we are capable of guarding our own coffers and administering our finances to the best advantages of all students in the Faculty. There need be no fear of failure if your Council is allowed to continue its policy of the strictest surveillance where matters of finance are involved. Unless you support your Council in this our whole organisation will crumble, for it is on the rock of finance that so many of our University organisations have been shattered.

Further, I would strongly urge that everyone of you pay your fees to the Council. The

fee of 10/- per year, you must all agree, is but a modest sum for the advantages to be derived therefrom. In addition I ask you to look just a few years ahead of to-day. Can you not visualize the benefits which students in only two or three years time will derive from an organisation which has a stable treasury? Can you not see the support which we will be able to give to our Medical Graduate Association and in return receive from them? I will mention but one example of what can be done with a little foresight on our part. I have had in mind for some time a scheme for the establishment of some mechanism within the school for the purpose of assisting financially the poorer student in our midst. It could take the form of an insurance system with loans to various students deserving of support and even younger graduates who experience some difficulty. I am convinced that, if the S.M.C. were in a sound financial position and able to start such a fund, we would in a very short space of time have other more powerful organisations interested. This may appear to many to be another idle dream, but it can be not only a bare reality but a powerful organisation within five years from now, if each one of you, through your Council, aims at establishing such a commendable social service.

*Supply Association.* This Association has proved itself to be a much needed want in the school. Many students have complained that they are unable to obtain all their requirements through the Association. This I consider to be a good sign, for it augurs well for an effort, barely one year old, when students have so rapidly learned of the improved facilities which it has brought about. I would, however, suggest that an attitude of understanding be adopted by students, for the committee has an unenviable task to perform, and the advance which it has made is testimony to the hard work of men like Messrs. Schultz, Harvey Cohen and Lawrance. The inclusion of a member representing the Medical Graduate Association should very shortly prove of inestimable value to our graduates, for I am convinced that with sufficient support from them we could obtain their requirements at a much reduced cost.

*Journals.* The work accomplished by our Journals' Committee of last year can only be described as amazing. Tribute must be paid to the inspiring leadership of Dr. J. Gillman,



“WELL NA.....JUST SO I I”

who has been so largely responsible for placing our journals on a level which few student organisations throughout the world have attained. He was ably assisted by a powerful committee including Dr. J. H. Gear, and Messrs. Mason and Stein. The finances were, you will remember, placed in the hands of the Finance Committee of Council and the work of Mr. Harvey Cohen, assisted by his committee, cannot be too highly praised. I would recommend the incoming Council to continue efforts towards establishing a Journals' finance committee, together with the Medical Graduate Association. Much depends on the attitude of that association, but I am sure that our graduates have even more foresight than ourselves to realise the value of such a centralisation of the finances of our journals.

*Common Rooms.* The problem of improving student amenities is one which has exercised the minds of members of Council for some years. From the moment the Men's Common Room was built, students realised that it was entirely inadequate. The fact that some 300 persons have to inhabit a room which can scarcely be considered to be satisfactory for 50, is glaring proof of the discomfort to which our men students have been, and still are, subjected during their leisure time. I appeal to the University authorities to remedy, as soon as is possible, this all too obvious deficiency. In the meantime I would suggest to the students themselves, to make the best of their misfortune by learning the essentials of co-operation. Gambling in itself is perhaps not the main undesirable pastime, but when it is associated with loud guffaws and swearing, as it seems almost invariably to be, one can appreciate the objections which so many students brought to the notice of the Council last year about this particular form of activity. I would suggest that the Council go into this matter immediately after its election, and I appeal to all students to support the Council in whatever steps it may decide to take to eradicate what has almost become a disease process among what is, after all, a minority of our students. There is still an unduly large element in the school who have no consideration for the comfort of others and these people ought to learn to submerge their private aspirations in the decisions of the majority.

I must congratulate Miss Broadhead and her committee for the very fine state in

which the Women's Common Room was maintained throughout the year. The behaviour and general interest in school activities which our women students showed last year is highly commendable and an example which we men would do well to appreciate and follow.

*Entertainments.* The work entailed in arranging entertainments of various sorts is no easy task, but the committee were responsible for a series of dances, dinners and concerts which were generally appreciated. I would suggest to the incoming Council that they attempt to arrange their social evenings on a smaller scale. In addition to the Annual Faculty Dinner, there should be at least one social function per month in the nature of a dance at the School, a concert, or the production of a play. An annual dinner for 4th, 5th and 6th year students should be arranged, to which the staffs of the Hospital and School should be invited. In this way only can I see our dinner fulfilling the essential functions of such an entertainment.

The Final Year Dinner will no longer take place. In its stead there will be, at the commencement of each year, a dinner organised by our Medical Graduate Association at which a welcome into graduate ranks will be extended to the newly qualified.

*Cultural Activities.* Our cultural activities are still sadly insufficient, and I think that the time is ripe for the introduction of a cultural activities section, for the purpose of catering for the cultural activities of the students. In the past year the Entertainments Committee dealt with this sphere, in addition to arranging dances, dinners, etc. The result has been partial success but we can now see how both activities can be greatly improved, in particular the cultural.

The absence of clinical material from *The Leech* bears adequate testimony to the need of a Medical Discussion Club at the School. I would, therefore, recommend that such a club be formed immediately. The club need not necessarily confine itself to clinical discussions, but this aspect should receive its careful consideration.

You will remember in my last report I recommended the formation of a Federation of student bodies interested in disease processes. The Onderstepoort veterinary students were keen to accept our invitation, and as a result a conference was arranged at the School towards the latter part of last year.

The conference took the form of a series of papers on "The economic importance of disease processes in South Africa." The standard of discussion was of a distinctly high order and a thoroughly enjoyable few days was spent by all who attended. I sincerely hope that the incoming Council will make every effort to draw the Capetown University Medical School into the Federation.

The Anatomical and Anthropological Society are to be congratulated on their fine series of lectures arranged last year, more so because the greater number of lectures were delivered by the students themselves. It is the hope of the society to interest the junior students in the School, and I advise every student who has just entered the School to interest himself or herself in the society's activities. Thanks are due to Dr. Galloway for initiating the society and for his guidance throughout the year.

The Society for the Study of Medical Conditions among the Bantu is one which has received the honour of having had offered to it the opportunity of investigating some 10,000 Bantu school children of Johannesburg. The investigation is one which will need the whole-hearted support of almost every student in the School—more particularly the 3rd, 4th and 5th year students. I would recommend to the incoming Council that they give their fullest support to this Society, for the work which they are undertaking will bring nothing but credit to the School and, in addition, will be of value to each student who is wise enough to accept the invitation of the Society to assist in the work.

*Curriculum Committee.* This committee has demonstrated the wisdom of the Council in introducing such a committee. In the short time of 3 months, they have accomplished work which would not have been done otherwise. A system has been established whereby 6th year students are to act as assistants to the housemen in the non-European hospital. I know that the 6th year students are going to give the scheme a good trial and I am sure that future 6th year students will gain invaluable experience if the scheme succeeds this year.

There will, in addition, be established a course in a Bantu language this year, probably Zulu. It will not be compulsory, but I am sure that there will be a large number of students interested. The difficulty of attending lectures at Milner Park will not exist, for

the Head of the Bantu Studies Department has been kind enough to arrange for the course to be held at the Medical School.

*Firm Representatives Committee.* The importance of the firm representatives system is not yet appreciated by all. Those firm units, which elected responsible representatives, can well appreciate the value of such a system. It is the privilege of every representative to take an interest in all the activities of his "firm" and it is likewise the duty of all students clerking in firms to assist their representative in carrying out his functions in their interests. There should be regular meetings of all "firms" to discuss any matters relating to hospital work, and individual students would do well to abide by the decisions of their particular units. I would recommend to the incoming Council that they consider carefully the arrangement of the personnel of the various firm units. This has in the past left much to be desired and I understand that a certain amount of dissatisfaction exists. Further, I am convinced that the Dean will view with favour any constructive scheme which the Council may offer.

*Sporting Activities.* In the sporting world the Medical School last year dominated the activities of almost every University club. I would like to congratulate all those students who obtained full- and half-blues, and I express the wish that this year will see even a greater interest on the part of medical students than did last year, for in these activities much can be done to foster truly harmonious relationships between ourselves and Milner Park students.

Various administrative changes have been made during the course of the year. The necessity of a book-keeper and secretary to the Council had last year become evident to all members of Council. Your Council has, therefore, employed a person to carry out such functions as were carried out in the past by all too willing men, but men who could not give the time necessary to become efficient in routine work. In addition several amendments to the constitution are recommended and I trust that this meeting will grant these amendments, as they result from the desire to rectify our errors of last year.

Before concluding, I wish to remark on an accusation which was frequently made during the course of last year. It was stated that the Council does not come into close enough touch with student opinion and that it there-

STUDENTS' MEDICAL COUNCIL, 1935.



Back Row: R. E. Kay, C. J. Southwood, F. Davidson (B.Sc. Eng.), B. Appel.  
Second Row: S. Spiro (M.B., Ch.B.), M. V. Kramer, W. H. Lawrance, M. Segal (B.Sc.), L. Frenkel (Housemen's Representative).  
Front Row: D. P. S. O'Keeffe (Jt. Hon. Secretary), W. E. B. Broadhead (Senior Women Student), E. W. Shultz (M.Sc., Vice-President),  
S. L. Kark (President), H. Cohen (Sen. Hon. Treasurer), J. Mackintosh (B.Sc., Jt. Hon. Secretary), T. D. Macnab (B.Sc., Asst. Hon. Treasurer).  
Inset: J. G. Cowley.

fore could never represent all their interests in School activities. There may be a good deal of truth in this statement, but to me it appears that the fault lies not with the constitution of the Council, which is as representative as any Council could be, but rather with the students who do not make use of their representatives. There is an art in appreciating and using a representative body which some of our students have not yet acquired, but are gradually learning; and I assure you that nothing has struck me more forcibly during my term of office than the fact that our success depends not on the work of a few individuals, but on the goodwill and co-operation of all students in every sphere of our work.

I wish to thank all members of staff and graduates who have interested themselves in our activities, but my report would be sadly deficient were it not to single out for praise the Dean of our Faculty. His constant interest and guidance throughout the year was a source of encouragement, which I cannot find words to describe.

Finally, may I be allowed to pay tribute to the members of my executive. Mr. Schultz and Mr. Harvey Cohen were always ready for work, and I apologise to them for the enormous amount with which I burdened them in their various offices. Mr. O'Keeffe was as dependable and efficient as any council could desire and although only a short time on the executive, proved his ability to hold office. Miss Mackintosh, who is the first woman student to have held executive office on the Council, did far more than her position required and was always of invaluable assistance in whatever sphere she was asked to work. May I also be permitted to acknowledge the many useful services which Miss Holgate voluntarily performed for the Council.

I can only wish my successor the full support and co-operation which I had the good fortune to receive from members of Council and its sub-committees during my term of office. Thank you.

#### **PASSING EVENTS.**

Dr. A. L. Allen is at present in Edinburgh, preparing to take his F.R.C.S.

Dr. R. J. Fleming has been appointed full-time assistant to the Prof. of Surgery.

Dr. N. L. Murray is practising in Gingindlovu, Zululand.

Dr. Mazell has returned from a prolonged visit overseas.

Dr. I. Frootko is practising in Johannesburg.

Dr. A. Frame has been appointed Resident Medical Officer at the Germiston Hospital.

Dr. M. A. Pringle has gone overseas for further study.

Dr. H. Seeff is in practice in Johannesburg.

Dr. S. Spiro is practising in Heidelberg.

Dr. W. P. Steyn has returned from London and is now practising in Standerton.

Dr. E. Zeiss is practising in Molteno.

Dr. A. H. Bischoff has set up practice in Hobhouse.

Dr. J. Gillman has spent 4 months in America studying post-graduate problems and methods of research. He is at present in Russia and intends proceeding to England and Denmark.

Dr. A. Y. Mason was awarded the Bronze Medal of the Southern Transvaal branch of the Medical Association of South Africa.

Dr. C. H. Joynt has been promoted to Surgeon Lieutenant Commander, and is stationed with the fleet at Alexandria.

Dr. S. C. Heymann has been appointed visiting Pediatrist to the Boksburg and Krugersdorp Hospitals.

Drs. R. J. Fleming, J. Wolfowitz, C. Moller, J. Schwartz and T. Schneider have been appointed clinical assistants on the Hospital Staff.

Professor Craib has been elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, London. He has been awarded a Carnegie Scholarship, and early next year intends proceeding to Europe and America to study the aims and methods of Medical Education.

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#### **CONGRATULATIONS TO:—**

Dr. G. van Selm on his marriage to Miss M. Nel.

Dr. R. J. Fleming on his recent marriage to Miss Serita Dales.

Dr. D. R. du Plessis on his marriage to Miss M. Richardson.

Dr. A. Tinker on his engagement to Miss Truida Schabort.

Dr. H. G. Segal on his engagement to Miss Millie Comaroff.

Dr. S. J. Cohen on his recent engagement.

Dr. Dangerfield on his engagement.

Mr. C. Roux on his engagement.

Miss S. Chanock on her engagement.