

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

The Singapore Medical Association was formed in 1959 with about 300 members, and has since grown five times in membership. The Association can be justly proud of the Singapore Medical Journal — it is its academic flagship. The present attainment of the Singapore Medical Journal speaks for itself and is due in part of its contributors, in part to its readers and in part to its Editors.

This editorial, written in the 21st year of the Association would be a fitting time and place to draw the attention of readers of the Journal to the usually unsung, but immensely devoted, dedicated and careful work of a line of respected doctors who have served the Association well as Editor of the Singapore Medical Journal — Dr Gwee Ah Leng, Dr Tan Kheng Khoo, Prof Lim Pin and the present incumbent Dr Feng Pao Hsii. To these doctors who have worked all these years silently and without thought of reward in the interest of the medical profession we take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt thanks.

For many of the doctors in Singapore, the SMJ is the journal where their first medical paper was published. Their subsequent contributions have been published in older and important journals elsewhere. This speaks well for the standard of medicine in Singapore and the work of our doctors. However, I would appeal to them to continue sending important papers to be published in the SMJ, for it is by its current content that a journal is judged, and the reputation of the SMJ can only be upheld by a steady stream of first-class contributions.

The SMJ is exchanged with many other medical journals across the world. These journals as well as books received for review in the journal have traditionally been donated to the Medical Library of the University of Singapore.

The SMJ is sent to members of the Malaysian Medical Association. Reciprocally members of the Singapore Medical Association receive without charge the worthy Malaysian Medical Journal. This is a tradition and a link which we are also proud of, and which we intend to continue.

It is obvious that as we enter the 1980's the Singapore Medical Journal is in fine shape. However, the well-being of the Journal is linked to that of the Singapore Medical Association. At this point in time three issues can be seen which bear relevance to the 1980's.

The Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Bill was read for the first time in Parliament on 11th December 1979. Members of the medical profession should read this Bill in conjunction with the Nursing Homes and Maternity Homes Registration Act, and will note that the Bill has a much wider coverage than the Act which it is designed to replace. Amongst other things for instance, it will be the first time that medical clinic premises will require a licence. This Bill is of national importance, since it will shape the structure of health care delivery, a subject that deeply affects the medical profession. Doctors are urged to study the Bill and help in preparing and presenting a Singapore Medical Association Memorandum to the Select Committee in due course.

Secondly, the Council of the Society of Private Practice intends to ask its members to resolve to withdraw from its present affiliation with the Singapore Medical Association and to seek separate registration with the Registrar of Societies. This move may well pose more problems that it is designed to solve. Members of the Society when thinking over the matter should perhaps consider the most important question to be, "Will this move serve best the long-term interest of the medical profession as a whole?"

Thirdly, the SMA has to seek new premises because the Alumni Medical Centre may have to be vacated within this decade. The Association would be happy to co-operate with all interested medical organisations in Singapore in seeking new premises and believes that there are great advantages in continuing to have offices in a single building.

As far as the Singapore Medical Journal is concerned, the move will not affect its continuity. The reader will probably realise only accidentally some time in the future that the journal has been sent from a different address. Hopefully contributors will adapt to the change spot-on.

Dr Mah Guan Kong

President

SINGAPORE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION