

*Mr. Porterfield*

Rep. Fogarty  
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It is a rare privilege to be asked to address a meeting of this type; a meeting which brings together so many of you--the Nation's leading medical scientists--to engage in your own special brand of shop talk.

I won't pretend that I understand much of what has gone on in this meeting. But I have understood enough to be deeply impressed with two things: First, the methodical way in which you are conducting cancer chemotherapy research. I feel that you are leaving nothing to chance and overlooking nothing that may help to fill out this jig-saw puzzle; Second, the calibre of the scientists who are planning and carrying out these vital research programs.

When you invited me to say a few words, I am sure you did not expect me to discuss cancer chemotherapy. I think you asked me and I know I came because, in addition to being the Nation's experts on cancer chemotherapy, you are also one of the most influential of the many groups of citizens who are fighting the battle against cancer.

As in all battles, the cancer battle has its troops of specialists. You fight in your laboratories; I in the halls of Congress; others fight in hospital wards - physicians and patients alike; and still others carry on the fight in State and local health departments and in the many chapters of the American Cancer Society.

Next year, however, we are going to carry our battle attack farther than ever before. We are going to mount a campaign which will call for some extra effort from all of us, over and beyond our specialized activities. I have come to talk to you about this campaign. Knowing about it, I am confident that you will find both the time and the ways to play an influential role in making it successful.

Prompted by my friends in the Public Health Service and the American Cancer Society, I personally fired the first gun for this campaign a few months ago when I introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives. This resolution authorizes and requests the President to designate 1962 as Cancer Progress Year. The House passed this resolution shortly before it adjourned. I understand the same resolution will be introduced in the Senate as soon as the new session begins in January. I hope and trust that it will be speedily adopted.

1962 is the 25th Anniversary of the National Cancer Institute Act of 1937; but the selection of that year as Cancer Progress Year is not merely to take note of the anniversary of a government agency. Rather, its purpose is to get across three things to the American public:

First, to give them an honest assessment of the progress made against cancer; progress which I believe can be directly traced to the concept of research responsibility which is embodied in the 1937 Act.

Second, to give them a realistic estimate of the effort that must still be made before cancer can be conquered.

Third, to help each and every individual understand how he can wage his personal battle against cancer.

The Cancer Progress Year resolution calls for a Presidential proclamation inviting the people of the United States, government and private agencies, and all media of communication, such as the newspapers, magazines, radio and television, to participate.

The leading sponsors of the campaign will be the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society. These agencies--one official and the other voluntary--are planning several projects by which the public information and education objectives of Cancer Progress Year will be realized. In accomplishing these undertakings they will need the cooperation of the scientific community, the public in general, and the mass media of communication. I hope that this cooperation will be forthcoming in full and hearty measure for a purpose which is decidedly in the public interest.

It is not going to be difficult to set forth the accomplishments of research against cancer during the past 25 years. They are on the record, and can be brought to public attention by various means. It is going to be more difficult to arrive at a sound and meaningful estimate of what must still be done to conquer cancer, and of what we may reasonably expect from research over the next few years.

I know from quite a few years of experience in dealing with appropriation requests for medical research that it is not easy to get scientists and research administrators to prognosticate. Yet, in talking to scientists in their laboratories, in private conversations with program people, and in committee hearings I have been able to get a line on some of the things we can confidently look forward to, and I would like to mention them.

-- I think it is reasonable to expect that definite proof will be found that at least some forms of cancer in human beings are caused by viruses.

-- It follows, then, that chemicals will be found that will kill cancer-causing viruses before they can produce a cancer. *may?*

-- Of course, we look forward with the utmost confidence to the discovery or development of new drugs for the treatment and even the cure of different forms of cancer.

-- And perhaps it is not unrealistic to hope that drugs will one day be found to enhance the body's natural resistance to malignant disease or overcome genetic defects that render a person liable to cancer.

Some of these ideas are rather far out, I admit. Certainly they are not beyond the scope of possibility. Your work at present, however, is of the utmost importance to the cancer problem as it now confronts us. There is no doubt in my mind that, short of a preventive, our best weapon against cancer is chemotherapy. I firmly believe that within a relatively short



time doctors will be able to give their cancer patients drugs that will not only relieve suffering but also offer a good chance of complete recovery. Already we have learned of five-year cures in several patients with choriocarcinoma treated with methotrexate at the National Cancer Institute. This is a small crack in the barrier we are trying to surmount with drug therapy, but it is a beginning.

I wish you continued success and challenge in this work. The urgency you feel about your task is one of the finest attributes of your calling. Cancer is a terrible menace. It is a constant threat to everyone of us and a stark reality to the 800,000 Americans who are under treatment for this disease. Yet, one out of three of these patients is saved, and there are more than a million living Americans who are regarded as having been cured of cancer. An alert public cooperating fully with an alert medical profession could raise the ratio of cure from one in three to one in two.

If it is possible now to save half of the people who get cancer, what about the other half? Their fate is in your hands-- in the hands of those who do research. How can the rest of us help? We can help by giving you financial support and equipping you with laboratory and hospital facilities in which to carry on your work. We can also help by providing for the education and training of the young people who must assist you and eventually assume your burdens.

In closing, let me say again how well impressed I am with the thorough manner in which you have reviewed the progress of your work. I am sure the meeting you are concluding has been as important as any step in the entire chemotherapy research program.