

Lasker Journalism Award Luncheon
Mr. Fogarty
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A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK AHEAD IN MEDICAL RESEARCH

Mr. Chairman, Albert Lasker Award Winners, Mrs. Lasker, Distinguished
Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I feel particularly honored to have been asked to speak on this
occasion.

It is our purpose here to recognize the accurate, imaginative, and
effective communication of medical science to the public. The winners can
well be proud of the contributions to society which these coveted awards
represent. Certainly in no small measure the interpreters of medical
science are responsible for the present confidence of the American people
in American science--a confidence that is based on understanding and
reflected in sustained support, both public and private.

Neither the Award-winners nor the audience will misconstrue it,
I am sure, if I point out that both our charming and talented hostess,
Mrs. Albert Lasker, and a dynamic and dedicated speaker at today's
luncheon, Mr. Basil O'Connor, are themselves superlative communicators
in the field in which these awards are given.

I wonder how you ladies and gentlemen who understand medical
science and are expert in its communication would respond to my assign-
ment, which is to project in ten minutes what I think should happen in
medical science in this country during the next ten years!

Like every man, I am the sum of the multiple factors, hereditary

and environmental, biological and psychological, that have affected and influenced the course of my life until this moment. Two of the extrinsic factors are my 17 years of service as a representative to Congress from the 2nd District of Rhode Island, and my ____ years of service, most of them as Chairman, of the House Committee primarily concerned, among other things, with annual appropriations for the Federal government's civilian health programs. My remarks today derive from my experience in these two capacities.

I will not attempt to describe either the progress that has been made against disease or the nature and status of medical research in this country today. These facts are known to you. I would like, however, to make two points which relate to developments in medical research during the past decade and serve as useful background for an assessment of medical research in the decade ahead.

The first point has to do with the essential unity of purpose among those who conduct, those who apply, and those who provide support for medical research. In our society, there is ample room for individual differences and organizational competition. But there is also a spontaneous, compelling drive to unify our efforts when the common objective is human betterment and community strength and well-being. In medical research, this unifying force has been particularly evident. Scientists and scientific institutions, industry and foundations, voluntary agencies and government have joined in a frontal attack on disease. The accomplishments have been great. And at the base of this sustained national effort, as must always be the case in a democratic society, has been the individual

citizen, who is interested because he is informed, and who is an effective participant because he is understanding and vocal.

The other point I wish to make concerning the past decade has to do with the volume and sources of support for medical research. It is well known (and sometimes the cause for uninformed and critical remarks) that the total funds made available for medical research have increased substantially, and that the Federal government has provided a progressively larger share of such funds. What is less well known is that despite this total increase--from roughly \$40 million in 1946 to roughly \$300 million in 1956--medical research has continued to represent only about 4 percent of our national investment in all research and development. And of our total National income, a negligible proportion is spent for medical research. What is also little known is the fact that although Federal funds in support of medical research have increased at a faster rate proportionately, funds from private sources have also increased, thus suggesting that government participation is a stimulus rather than a deterrent to private support.

So much for the retrospective look. Now--to look a decade ahead. I will rotate my personal radar screen toward a series of objects on our route, some near and threatening, some distant and challenging definition, and see if I can develop an impression of a course of events I cannot really see.

The threatening shortage of trained scientists, who can follow down promising research leads and engender the creative new approaches which are the essence of scientific progress, is a matter of absolute

urgency in the years immediately ahead. I look for three things to meet this problem: renewed efforts to stimulate the young and gifted to enter upon careers in science; progressive improvements in the specialized training processes and in the support of individuals and institutions undertaking such training; and increases in the stability of and compensation for medical research careers.

Related to scientific manpower is the question of facilities. Good medical research demands extensive laboratory and clinical space and complex instrumentation and equipment. I look for the nation's medical research plant to be modernized and expanded significantly in order to sustain an expanded research effort.

The testimony of literally hundreds of witnesses before Congress has strengthened my conviction that we must give further emphasis to basic studies if the ultimate goal--the conquest of disease--is to be achieved. There is a strong tendency, and particularly in this country, to want advances that can be applied in medical and public health practice, and virtually to ignore the years of fundamental work that lie behind each major advance. I look for and hope for a broader recognition of the vital importance of basic studies in the biological sciences both in research training and in the support of research projects.

At the same time, there must be a concerted effort to explore every promising lead that exists today and extend it to the point of maximum utility in the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of disease.

It is apparent that even with the interest and resources that are now being brought to bear on this question, there are many areas in which today's knowledge is not being fully applied, and I look for the future to hold both the impetus and the support for such widespread and effective application.

It is my belief, too, as I know it is yours, that the years ahead will witness a strengthening of these policies and practices which assure the freedom of the investigator and the independence and integrity of scientific institutions.

I see a trend toward broadening the participation in our medical research effort. The splendid resources of industry are just beginning to be used and can be used still more widely for certain kinds of research which is linked with national needs. And I have only recently learned of the exciting plans under discussion for the city of New York to expand its medical and public health research facilities and program in the years ahead. Events such as these confirm the wisdom of diversity, both in sources of support and in patterns of administration, as long as there is unity of purpose.

Finally, I look for a steady increase in funds from all sources for medical research, limited only by the availability of manpower and facilities and by the number of potentially rewarding projects which warrant support.

In this connection, I believe a sound national policy should be the full utilization of the existing research potential and the simultaneous development of that potential through training and construction programs.

If this policy were endorsed and implemented, and assuming the continued growth of our productive economy without military stress, there is every reason why medical research in the next decade should absorb a larger portion, perhaps even twice as much, of our total national research and development effort. Certainly no part of that research effort is more constructive or more affirmatively related to the needs and aspirations of the people.

The foregoing seven points, I believe, represent a minimum national program if we are to attack with vigor the challenging medical and public health problems that are with us now and loom even larger in the years ahead.

Again, as at the start of my talk, I will not attempt to describe for this audience these challenging health problems that face us as a nation during the next decade. Control of the chronic illnesses-- understanding and treatment of mental disorders--prevention of the afflictions of children--the health problems of the aged--the relation of environmental factors to disease--merely to name a few problems in the most general of terms is to reveal their magnitude and the paramount importance of using every resource at our command to achieve their resolution. Such a course of action is clearly warranted in both human and economic terms by the demonstrated results of ~~the~~ medical research since its inception at the turn of the century and particularly during the past decade.

In the evolutionary process during the years ahead, you and your colleagues who represent medical journalism have a critically important role. Your primary responsibilities, of course, are to the people you reach through the media you employ. The people look to you for information that is accurate, interesting, and in perspective. They rely on you to cover the important developments in medical science--to be their eyes and ears--so that they may know both the nature and the method of research in health and disease, its successes and its failures, its progress and its problems. This function is important for any aspect of American life, since the essence of successful democracy is an informed and thereby participating citizenry.

Because of this, the Congress depends on you, since the successful operation of representative government depends on an informed electorate. It is particularly important and particularly difficult in a field such as medical science, where the substance of the work is often difficult to comprehend and must therefore be paraphrased and interpreted.

From my contact with scientists, I know that they would not wish to modify any of these responsibilities you bear. The single plea that I have heard repeated often enough so that I assume its universality if not its validity is that the bits and pieces of new scientific knowledge be presented as that, and in context, to minimize the understandable tendency that all people have to reach out too soon for definitive answers to urgent problems of health and disease.

I cannot conclude these remarks without recognition of the marked increase in both the quantity and the quality of medical journalism in the last decade. No one, I think, can have lived through these years without being aware of the contributions such reporting has made to public understanding of medical research and its application in medical and public health practice.

Those who have been selected to receive the Albert Lasker Journalism Awards represent the apex of achievement in this field.

May I congratulate you.....and you, Mrs. Lasker, for your wisdom in establishing these awards.....and all of you who have contributed so much through the interpretation of medical science to the American people.