

REMARKS OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, U. S. REPRESENTATIVE SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND ON OCCASION OF A REPORT TO THE NATION PRESENTED BY AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION AND NATIONAL HEART INSTITUTE ON A DECADE OF PROGRESS AGAINST CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE AT THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AUDITORIUM FEBRUARY 19, 1959

This occasion has been a tribute to a decade of progress against heart disease. It has honored the scientists who have dedicated their efforts to the advancement of knowledge, and those who have applied that knowledge in medical and public health practice. And it has recognized the contributions of the American Heart Association and the National Heart Institute in the giant strides that have been taken toward the successful conquest of the Nation's Number One Killer.

The Heart Association epitomizes the tremendous urge of the American people to achieve better health through voluntary, collaborative effort. It is one reason why medical research, in contrast with most other fields of research endeavor, finds as much support from private as it does from public sources. There is lasting strength in such diversity, and I am confident that a balanced pattern of support will be maintained in the years ahead.

The Public Health Service's National Heart Institute, Federal partner of the Heart Association, mounts its programs through tax funds. As a legislator with special responsibilities for the activity of the Federal government in medical research, I have ample evidence that the people unequivocally support this use of tax funds for medical research. In a sense, then, since Federal funds are and must be used in a way that is responsive to public forces, its funds, too, are "volunteered" by the people for the purpose of bringing heart disease under control.

As I have listened to these reports of the progress that has been made against heart disease, I feel its impact primarily in human terms. Broad statistics are of course important in appraising all or a segment of the National health and medical research scene. We must never forget that fifty-four percent of all deaths in the United States are caused by some form of cardiovascular disease.. that this meant almost 900,000 deaths from heart disease last year .. and that the total number of

deaths from the more than twenty disorders of the heart and blood vessels, about which so little is known can be expected to increase. But one must never forget that behind the statistics are people, and their families, and their friends, and the community of which they are a living part. When premature and tragic death strikes -- death which would be unnecessary if man knew as much as he should know and must know about his life processes -- it is a 100 percent failure for medical science, as far as the individual and his loved ones are concerned.

The decade of progress that has been summarized today has permitted the percentage, in the case of many people that you and I know, to be on the other hand, a 100 percent success.

For example, I show a child who suffered an acute attack of rheumatic fever which led to heart disease. Once, she would undoubtedly have been stricken again and again, with increasing damage to the heart, and early death. Today, with antibiotic prophylaxis

and sound medical care, she can avoid increments of damage to her heart and predictably can live a normal, health, and happy life.

I know a man in his forties -- a man with average income and a family of three young children -- who is afflicted with severe hypertension. Again with a combination of sound medical care and therapy with blood pressure lowering agents that have been recently developed, he is living a normal, productive life as a father and breadwinner... and his doctor finds not only that he can keep the hypertension under control, but that it becomes less difficult to control as time goes on.

And I know a child, a boy of three, born with a congenital heart defect -- a large hole in the wall of one of the chambers of the heart. Only a few years ago, the defect could not have been repaired, and the child would have been doomed to a few years of half-living, and premature death before his teens. Today, the defect has been located and measured. New surgical techniques have been developed making it possible for the opening to be closed. The child, and his parents, are now awaiting the time when the doctors think it

best for the operation to be performed. There is, of course, no absolute guarantee of success. But the chances are very good indeed and well worth taking, and the parents will be eternally grateful to medical science, because they have hope instead of hopelessness.

There are just three among many people I know, and you know, who measure the past decade of progress against heart disease in the most meaningful terms of all.

But the long and torturous road to better understanding and better ability to control the diseases of man stretches out ahead. We cannot know its length or its turnings, or the lanes that lead off into a network of pathways that may or may not lead back into the main route again. But we can do two things. First, we can express and demonstrate our confidence in the scientists, research institutions, professional societies, and the American Heart Association and other health agencies that lead in the support of and search for new knowledge and the means for its application for better health. And second, we can assure

that we the people do not impede progress against disease by failing to provide adequately, through our contributions and our appropriations, for the support of health and medical research activities today, and for the increased resources required if the health challenges of tomorrow are to be met.

I join with you whole-heartedly and pledge that I shall continue to do everything in my power to see that these needs are met.

I cannot do more than give enthusiastic endorsement and support to the heart campaign; and to the other fine voluntary agencies which put private funds to work for the people's health.

But I can, and will, work to the best of my ability, both in committee and on the floor of the House of Representatives, and in both legislation and appropriation, to see that the health and medical research activities of the Public Health Service are more adequately supported than is true in what is now proposed as the President's Budget for 1960.

I have studied that budget carefully, in preparation for the appropriation hearings that are to start within a few days before the House Committee of which I am chairman. I am very sorry to report that the Administration apparently feels it must go backward instead of moving ahead, if one can judge by the proposals that have been placed before us.

As a member of Congress I share in the responsibility to create and maintain an efficient and responsible Federal government. As a member of Congress, I also have a responsibility to see that basic human needs are met. I deeply believe that in the interest of an efficient and responsible government, its health programs must advance instead of standing still or falling back.

From the record of the Congress in the past, from the sentiment I sense in the Congress today, and from my personal knowledge of the convictions of many of its members -- including many who are here in the audience today -- I can assure the American people that their Congress will continue to act for

their better health. In this matter, we could have no stronger ally than the distinguished and able Senator Lister Hill of Alabama.

Together, all of us, we will bring into being another decade of progress in health that will even surpass the brilliant decade that has been recorded in these proceedings today.