

RACERASE BOND

REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, U. S. REPRESENTATIVE, SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND, THE ANNUAL MEETING OF AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, OCTOBER 4, 1961

Waterman | Warren | Hickey  
Chas Kilvert | Waldron | Stoddard  
Summer

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am very pleased to be here this evening at the annual meeting of the Rhode Island Division of the American Cancer Society. I am glad to take part with you in a recapitulation of the progress we have made in the campaign against Cancer, and to share with you a look into the future to determine, so far as we can, the additional gains we can expect in the course of the next few years.

This is an appropriate time for us to assess our position in the crusade against Cancer. We are on the threshold of the twenty-fifth anniversary of one of the most vital pieces of health legislation ever enacted by the Congress of the United States. I refer, of course, to the National Cancer Institute Act which was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1937.

In the twenty-five years following the passage of the Act which established the National Cancer Institute, we have engaged in a broad, continuing assault against the disease that strikes such terror in our community and causes so much suffering and hardship among our people.

This assault has been a two-pronged affair with the federal government doing its share of the job through the National Cancer Institute and the citizens of the country — on a voluntary basis — doing the other half of the job through the American Cancer Society which is represented by you people here tonight.

I want to congratulate you on the fine spirit of co-operation you have displayed during this quarter of a century for it was only the combined efforts of the federal government and the American Cancer Society that made possible the gains we point to this evening with great pride and with greater hope for the future.

To commemorate that co-operation and to bring it more vividly to the attention of the entire nation, I introduced a resolution in Congress last month designating 1962 as Cancer Progress Year. The resolution authorizes and requests the President of the United States to issue proclamations inviting the participation of the people, government and private agencies, newspapers, magazines, radio and television and all other interested parties in the observance of 1962 as Cancer Progress Year.

The resolution was passed by the House of Representatives the day after I introduced it, and the Senate has given its assurance that it will take it up immediately after it convenes on January 10th. Needless to say, President Kennedy will support it whole-heartedly — and I am confident that we can look to 1962 as a year of great emphasis and accomplishment, publicly and scientifically, with rewarding results to the health of our nation.

To measure the progress we have made up to the present time, we must look at several parts of the whole Cancer complex and then, piecing the parts together, we can see a picture which begins to take on great meaning.

In the first place, we have made real strides in defining the role played by environment — particularly industrial environment — in the causation of Cancer in man. The first cancer-causing material was identified in the 18th century, but it was not until 1937 that modern cancer research began to identify a number of substances that produce cancer in laboratory animals and some that cause Cancer in man.

As a result of these environmental studies, we have already been able to remove the hazard of lung cancer in the chromate ore industry and the hazard of cancer of the bladder in the dyeing industry. Further environmental studies going on now offer clear evidence that we shall soon be able to define — and then

defeat — the hazard of potential cancer agents in food additives, in sprays and solutions used in insecticides, and in radiation, air pollution and water pollution.

In the second place, we have moved forward in the techniques of the detection of Cancer although we have not yet discovered one single, infallible test for all forms of the disease. Most of us in Rhode Island are familiar with the "Pap Smear" technique, named for Dr. George N. Papanicolau of the Cornell University Medical School. This is a cell examination of women which discloses the presence of cancer of the uterus. If this test were used universally, it would save most of the 14,000 lives that Uterine Cancer takes each year. The test detects the presence of Cancer months or even years before it becomes invasive or is likely to show any obvious symptoms. Early diagnosis like this permits early treatment and — in most cases — actual cure. In fact, I think it is safe to say that the course of medical procedure permitted by this one simple test accounts for a significant part of the 40 per cent reduction in Uterine Cancer deaths noted over the past 25 years. A good deal of our current Cancer research is directed to the development of other equally simple and effective test procedures.

In the third place, great gains have been made in the treatment of Cancer, most of them in the relatively short period of time that intensive research has been applied to treatment as a study. Surgery and Radiation have been radically improved. Therefore, separately — and in combination — as they are frequently employed, they are now used with increased effectiveness. New drugs and new combinations of drugs evolving from the greatly expanded Chemotherapy Program as complements to surgery and radiation have also yielded fine results. And hormone therapy has produced dramatic results in Cancer of the Prostate, Cancer of the Breast and Cancer of the Uterus.

The significance of these and other findings in Cancer Research is revealed in a couple of simple statistics. In 1937 of every 100 people who discovered they had Cancer, 75 died. Only 25 won their personal war with the disease. Today, 33 out of every 100 survive and while that improvement may not be as great as we would like, it means that thousands more mothers can return to their households, thousands more children are restored to their parents and thousands more breadwinners can continue to provide homes for their families.

Along with these important and promising studies in surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, attention is also being given to the role of our body chemistry and genetic make-up in both cancer development and treatment.

The mechanisms by which the body resists both infection and cancer growth are under searching inquiry. We have all heard of those rare cases of cancer that disappear spontaneously. I am told that cancers do not always spread easily through the body and often encounter some mysterious kind of resistance. I understand that research on this phenomenon is already beginning to reveal small amounts of substances in healthy individuals that are active against tumor cells.

A more complete understanding of why some people develop cancer and others do not suggests still another possibility. I am told that heredity affects an individual's resistance to cancer and that a number of diseases are due to defects in the genetic make-up. There is a possibility that chemical substances eventually can be utilized to modify the body's genetic apparatus and to correct genetic defects, thus enhancing resistance to cancer. This genetic aspect of Cancer is being explored more fully and it seems to offer a brand new approach to the problem.

The great hope for the immediate future, however, seems to rest in the virus field. The discovery that viruses can cause tumors in animals was made in the first decade of this century, but scientists today believe that it

will shortly be demonstrated that several important human cancers are likewise caused by viruses. They are strongly of the opinion that now is the time to advance research in this field with vigor, and many of our scientists have swung over to the study of human cancers with the methods already so successful in the work with animals.

I am told by those who plot the course of cancer studies that the involvement of virology has been the most significant advance in the modern era of medical research. Cancer research has long made use of all the biological sciences and some of the physical sciences as well, but only in the last three or four years has virology assumed the prominent role which now identifies it unquestionably with the cancer field.

As a result of recent conferences with the most eminent men in the field,  
I can say to you tonight that I am completely confident that we are on the brink  
of scientific proof that leukemia in human beings is a virus-caused disease. I  
make this statement on the most competent scientific authority and with the full  
knowledge of all it implies to the scientific community and to the people of our  
nation.

Very recently two investigators at the National Cancer Institute reported that they have extracted viruses from the blood of leukemic rats. When injected into other rats, these viruses caused leukemia sooner and in a higher percentage of animals than viruses recovered from other tissues. The scientists are now using a similar technique in the search for viruses in the blood of human leukemia victims. There is sound evidence to believe that their efforts will be crowned with early success.

I am equally confident that the extension of these studies in virology will lead to the identification of other specific viruses that are causally related to other and equally important cancers. This should mean the use of viral products in the early and specific diagnosis of cancer and — we would hope — to its prevention.

To sum up the prospects for the future based on the accomplishments of the past and the expectations of the scientists working the laboratories today, I believe we can look for the following milestones in the path of the conquest of Cancer:

- Proof that certain forms of Cancer in human beings are caused by viruses.
- Chemicals that will kill cancer-causing viruses before they can do damage.
- Drugs that will cure different forms of Cancer.



And, further in the future:

- Drugs that will enhance the body's natural resistance to malignant disease.
- Drugs that will overcome genetic defects that make people liable to Cancer.
- A vaccine that will immunize human beings against Cancer.

Some of these accomplishments will take longer than others and what the rate of progress for all of them will be, nobody can tell with certainty. That is the nature of research. But one thing we can be sure of: when we look back on the past 25 years and reckon our progress from a standing start, we can be completely confident that the momentum we have today will produce magnificent results in the next 25 years.

In those years to come, as in the years that have gone by since 1937, I know that the American Cancer Society will work along with the National Cancer Institute to achieve their common goal. I hope, in 1962, which these partners will share as Cancer Progress Year, that we will be able to make real progress in the campaign against Cancer and — when 1962 has passed into history and we look back on it in the years to follow — that instead of knowing it as Cancer Progress Year, we shall come to know it as Cancer Breakthrough Year. Let us all dedicate ourselves to that proposition and, with our combined resources and our combined energies, we shall make it a truly memorable year.

Thank you.