

THE AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SCIENTISTS — PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS*
1978

At the end of every presidential term, there is a brief pause while the President expresses his thoughts and informs the College of the year's progress. Firstly, the activities of the College for the past year. I have been fortunate to have had the assistance of a very able sub-council during the year, to help with the many deliberations coming before it.

Two new functions have been added to College activities — the College Oration in honour of Colonel Rose, which you have already heard tonight, and the inception of the President's committee, an ongoing committee selected at present, to be elected in the future from those members of College who gained entrance by examination. Its function is to form a bridge between new members, non-College members and the College Council. The inaugural meeting was held Sunday morning. Its function and purpose is a more direct and meaningful liaison between Council and newly-admitted members of the College. As a further step, a member of this committee will be present at future Council meetings to further this liaison.

This year has seen the re-organisation of examinations with Dr Rushford (Preliminary) and Professor Rex (Fellowship) assisting the Chief Examiner. There have been a steady increase in graduates taking examinations at all levels.

I should also like to mention the New Zealand meeting in February. I feel it is of extreme importance that the President should attend this New Zealand meeting every year as it is the only opportunity many of our members in New Zealand have to discuss their problems. I look forward to the possibility that arrangements can be made to hold the Annual General Meeting in New Zealand at some definite period on a rotational basis.

As our College is one to recognise excellence in the profession, it is necessary for us to reflect on *What is Education*, for it is only through education that excellence can be achieved.

Erasmus wrote in *Praise of Folly* that in the first golden age of the world, there was no need for the perplexities of knowing who is the educated man. Then, there was no other learning, but what was naturally collected from every man's commonsense improved by easy experience.

It is only some 300 years ago that Comenius urged the establishment in London of a college of learned men to bring together in one book, the sum total of human wisdom so expressed, as to meet the needs of both the present and all future generations. This, of course, proved to be an attractive idea in the 17th century, for this was a period in time where learning was regarded as a substantial and measurable quantity to be acquired and possessed. Unfortunately this quantitative ideal of education with its resultant processes and standards is still widely proclaimed and it tempts us to seek the evidences of education in the variety of sciences studied, and generally, in the quantity of facts held in the memory reserve.

A host of knowledges encompass us, bewildering in their variety and interest. We often must exclude many to choose one, and with this choice, comes the deprivation of the wider field of knowledge which then becomes closed to us. This quantitative method of estimation of education breaks down by its own limitations.

What then can be our concept of education today?

Firstly we should consider the power and habit of reflective thought. Due to rapid onslaught of fresh ideas from modern technology, we may often fail to get a firm and deep hold of any of the great facts that come into our lives. Socrates insisted

that the life which asks no questions of itself, which traces events back to no causes and forward to no purposes, which raises no vital issues of principle, and which seeks no interpretation of what passes within and without, is not a human life at all.

The educated man must have standards of truth, of experience and of wisdom by which all new proposals can be judged. These standards can only be achieved by reflected thought, aided by a fund of principles.

Secondly, we should consider the growth of mind. There are those whose minds have been trained to a certain point, that is a BVSc., and at this stage, they crystallised and refused to move forward from this point forever more. This type of mind fails to give evidence of education at all; it has acquired much, but fails to blossom; it is not dead but in a trance. The impulse for continuous study for self-education is missing and if this be the case, education has failed.

Early specialisation, with its attendant limited range of both information and interest, is the enemy of growth, as is also the failure to recognise the relationship between the subject of one's own special interests and the wider fields of the profession.

Thirdly, we should consider efficiency. This is efficiency of mind, of tongue and of hand. All three must be combined together to give the complete man. Deficiency in all, or any, can only detract from the whole. Education then, should enable us to think and to reason logically from basic principles, to express these thoughts logically for the benefit of others, and, above all, to be able to do something and be able to do it well.

So much then for the philosophy of education. Where does our College fit in the education system of today?

Due to the diversity of our profession, it is no longer possible for all avenues of learning to be covered by formal courses at universities and like institutions. The speed of increase in the extent of our knowledge is so great that often the production of that knowledge outstrips its dissemination or its technical usage. We rely heavily on formal university education to ensure the basics of our profession are being met. We must however realise, that, with changes in agriculture due to economic circumstances, and changes due to urban development robbing veterinary schools of access to teaching material, often these formal courses become lopsided. Too often are heard complaints of insufficient practical experience emanating from both new graduates and old alike.

However, I wonder how often the older graduate making the complaint pauses and asks himself how can *I* rather than *they* improve this situation. Can you bear with me while I read to you the objects of the College?

To advance the study of veterinary science and to bring together members of the veterinary profession for their common benefit; and to hold, conduct or arrange examinations of professional proficiency for the purpose of determining qualification for membership of the College and Fellowship of the College.

And further to read you Dr Stewart's outline of the functions of the College, one year after its inception —

'The establishment of the College now provides the opportunity for the recognition of advanced professional skills and proficiency for those members of the profession who are not in a position to devote the time to acquire higher academic qualifications, or who do not have the desire to, but who aspire to a higher standard of proficiency in their chosen field, the

* This address was delivered in Sydney in May 1978 by Dr R. Pascoe. It was the occasion of the Annual General Meeting of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists.

means by which they can obtain an additional qualification in recognition of their superiority are now established by this College.

It is likewise contrary to the best interests of the College to overly encourage extraordinary narrow specialisation and this is of necessity the field of the research workers and academics.

This then poses a delicate question of from whom and from where does the educational stimulus come. May I suggest that each and every member with the interest of the College at heart must be prepared in some small or large way, to endeavour to aid in this educational process. It will certainly be hampered, or even destroyed, unless each and every one of us, and again I must emphasise that it is we, who must strive to increase the expertise standing and professional knowledge of our

members, and by so doing, will encourage not only our members to achieve the high goal of Fellow, but will be our example, encourage veterinarians outside the College to aspire to membership not to become members of an old boys' club, but to join an elite College of veterinarians, unafraid to share their hard-won knowledge with their fellow men to the betterment not only of themselves, but all mankind.

Finally, I should like to thank all those councillors who have been of such a tremendous help during the past year. My grateful thanks to Professor Rex for his excellent help as secretary, to Professor Blood and his board of examiners for their help with the College examinations, and to those members of the medical colleges who have assisted us with the conduct of the Fellowship examinations.

AUSTRALIA/USSR ANIMAL SCIENCE EXCHANGE

Under the Australia/USSR agreement on scientific and technical cooperation a 4-man mission visited the Soviet Union from 26 May to 18 June to examine animal research institutes in the USSR with the view to recommending ways in which animal science cooperation can take place between USSR and Australia. The members of the 4-man delegation were: R. B.

Dun, Department of Agriculture, New South Wales; T. J. Heath, Veterinary School, University of Queensland; W. J. Pryor, Bureau of Animal Health, Canberra; and Trevor Scott, Division of Animal Production, CSIRO, Clunes Ross Laboratory, New South Wales.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON NEONATAL DIARRHOEA

An international symposium on Neonatal Diarrhoea (sponsored by the Veterinary Infectious Disease Organisation of Saskatoon) will be held at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada on 2-5 October 1978. Topics under discussion include *E. coli*, *Salmonellae*, plasmid mediated attributes of virulence, rotavirus, coronavirus, pathogens of human in-

fant, host resistance, prevention, control, treatment and environmental factors. Keynote speakers are Drs H. Williams Smith, H. W. Moon, G. N. Woode and S. W. Martin. Further information may be obtained from the Secretary, VIDO, 124 Veterinary Road, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada S7N 0W0.

PERSONAL

At a recent meeting of the New South Wales Sheep Breeders Association **Dr G. Edgar** was elected a Vice-President. Also at the same meeting **Mr L. Pockley** was re-elected also as a Vice-President. Mr Pockley is a grazier with a distinguished academic background who has had considerable association with members of the veterinary profession. He is the inaugural chairman of the Orange Agricultural College Advisory Coun-

cil. Mr Pockley was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Others who received honours were **Dr N. W. Britton**, formerly Principal of Queensland Agricultural College, an OBE for agricultural education, and **Dr G. A. Letts** a CBE for parliamentary public service in the Northern Territory.