XX INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

München, August, 1966

The XXth International Congress of Ophthalmology was held in München from August 14 to 19, 1966. By universal consent the meeting was an immense success both scientifically and from the social point of view. There was a vast crowd of delegates—2,147 from 76 countries with, in addition, an almost equal number of wives, children, and friends, the largest contingents being from Germany and the U.S.A.; nevertheless, as would be expected in Germany, the organization was so good that confusion was entirely absent. The organizing committee, under its president, H. K. Müller, and its secretary-general, E. Weigelin, both from Bonn, are to be highly congratulated. Indeed, the only thing they failed to arrange was the weather, which was initially too hot and then too wet. And the only cloud that spread some sadness over a happy gathering was the sudden death of the senior vice-president, W. Rohrschneider of München, some days before the Congress met. The badge of the Congress and the medallion worn by the participants very appropriately showed the profiles of von Helmholtz and von Graefe.

The Congress took place in the exhibition grounds not far from the centre of the city, a vast complex which provided ample space for all the congress activities, including halls for several meetings at one time, luxurious accommodation for the scientific and trade exhibitions, two cinema theatres, congress offices, restaurants, a post office, a bank, a travel agency, and abundant opportunities for the parking of cars. The opening ceremony took place in the Bayernhalle, which accommodates comfortably some 4,000 people—and was filled. The President of West Germany, Dr. H. Lübke, opened the proceedings; after speeches by H. K. Müller, President of the Congress, and Derrick Vail, President of the International Council, delegates spoke for their colleagues in the six continents. Vail presented the Gonin Medal to François (Ghent), and the German Ophthalmological Society were given permission to present their von Graefe Medal to Goldmann (Berne). During the two intervals delightful music was played by the München Chamber Orchestra.

The scientific programme consisted of two main discussions held in the large Bayernhalle, two round-table discussions, five symposia, fifty free papers and an abundance of ophthalmological films, and the simultaneous translation of each speaker into the three official languages (German, English, and French) was as perfect as it could be. The complexity usually arising from the simultaneous occurrence of several items was much relieved by the announcement by closed-circuit television of each film and the place where it was about to be shown, and any special announcements that were required. The first discussion was on the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the retinal circulation led by Cogan (Boston), Hirsch (Cologne), and Michaelson (Jerusalem); the second was on uveitis in children, its aetiology, diagnosis, and treatment, led by Witmer (Zürich), Perkins (London), and Palomino Dena (Mexico). Each was followed by contributions to discussions which were continued at subsequent sessions; and both were excellent.

The two round-table talks dealt with statistical methods for the evaluation of therapeutic results (Moderator, Lindner, Geneva), and infections of the eye particularly by viruses and fungi (Bietti, Rome). A new and excellent idea was the holding of several symposia during the week before the Congress; here a relatively small company of experts on each subject met and their findings were reported and then discussed at the Congress. The Jules Gonin Club met at München under the chairmanship of Meyer-Schwickerath (Essen) and dealt with the treatment of intra-ocular tumours, the avoidance of excessive surgery and the use of new surgical techniques in dealing with retinal detachments. The clinical significance of electroretinography was discussed at Ghent by a group under the chairmanship of François. The biochemistry of the eye was discussed at Tutzing where the moderator was Nordmann (Strasbourg), difficulties in the diagnosis and treatment of glaucoma at Tutzing under the chairmanship of Goldmann (Berne), and strabismus at Giessen under the chairmanship of Jampolski (San Francisco). At the same time meetings were held of the two
daughter societies of the International Council: the International Association for the Prevention of Blindness, with Franceschetti (Geneva) as president, at which the main topic was accidental blindness in children; and the International Organization against Trachoma, with Bietti (Rome) as president, at which the main subject was the immunology and serology of this disease. At the latter meeting Thygeson (San Francisco) was presented with the Chibret Gold Medal for his work on trachoma.

Twelve sessions for free papers were arranged mainly in blocks, comprising physiology, methods of examination, cataract, keratoplasty, tumours, genetics, rare diseases, and surgical techniques. Throughout the Congress the two cinema theatres functioned for the showing of new ophthalmological films.

Together with this sumptuous scientific feast, an equally delightful and hospitable social programme was arranged. The main items included an initial informal gathering on the evening before the Congress started at the magnificent Herkulessaal, the former Royal Palace of München, with its vast hall and beautiful miniature theatre; an extraordinarily perfect performance of Der Rosenkavalier at the State Opera House; a reception by the Bavarian Prime Minister at the Schleissheim Castle, the former summer residence of the Electors of Bavaria; a glorious “Bavarian Evening” (instead of an official banquet) in a brewery (Löwenbräukeller), at which the continuous and typically Bavarian entertainment was superb, particularly the exciting tune played by a team of men by the cracking of whips (with, as occurred in Bruges in 1958, a gift to all participants of their beer mugs); an excursion with dinner and a concert in the hall of mirrors of the 19th century Herrenchiemsee Castle of King Ludwig II, on an island in Lake Chiemsee; a concert of chamber music in the Curtillies Theatre by the Capella Monacensis; and a cocktail party given by the Congress Committee and the German Ophthalmological Society at the Haus der Kunst. In addition to these, visits were arranged to several places in München (including world-famous breweries), as well as excursions further afield in Bavaria. Altogether, it was a programme which, if fully exploited, left no spare time; and we all learned how apparently normal it is to drink fantastic quantities of München beer—which, incidentally, is very good indeed.

The Closing Ceremony, held on August 19, comprised the usual speeches by the President of the International Council of Ophthalmology, the President of the Congress, and representatives of the six continents. At this session the German Ophthalmological Society and the officers of the Congress were warmly—and justly—thanked for the excellence of the meetings and their hospitality and kindness as hosts. It was a congress which no one who was present will forget. S. D.-E.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

The International Council of Ophthalmology met on August 14, 1966, at München, immediately before the XXth International Congress, under the presidency of Derrick Vail. The Treasurer’s report showed a good financial position with SF 54,312 in credit; this being so the Council decided to devote a sum not exceeding SF 10,000 to the assistance of young ophthalmologists in attending the next International Congress (1970). Applicants, who have an official recommendation from their own country, should write to the Secretary of the Council. Moreover, in view of the fact that there are still 1,500 copies of the Lexicon Ophthalmologicum unsold (published 1959 and translating ophthalmological terms into English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Latin), it was resolved that 152 universities in undeveloped countries should receive the gift of a copy from the Council, for which the publisher (Karger of Basel) have generously cut the price by half.

The sixth edition of the Index Ophthalmologicus, giving the names and addresses of all the ophthalmologists in the countries associated with the International Federation, was approved as prepared for the Council by Dr. Copper of Holland; this volume contains 602 pages, an increase of 50 per cent. on its predecessor published 8 years previously. Every delegate to the Congress
received a copy gratis and further copies, the sale of which will be widely advertised, can be bought for D.fl. 60 (U.S. dollars 16.50) from the Dutch publishers (Kroese).

The President of the XXth Congress (H. K. Müller) detailed the arrangements made for the Congress and was warmly congratulated. The remainder of the business was reviewed and confirmed by the International Federation.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF OPHTHALMOLOGY met during the XXth International Congress under the Presidency of Derrick Vail. Three reports came under review, two of them still in process of finalization. The Index of Ophthalmic Drugs (Chairman, MacLean, New York), which gives details of the trade names of ophthalmic drugs as used in different countries throughout the world, is not yet completed; this will be of great value in correlating therapeutic reports appearing in various journals. The report on the International Standardization of Tonometers is also still in progress; it is based on the standards used in the U.S.A. with certain minor modifications as advised by European countries and, after a trial for 2 years in Germany, will again be considered by the International Council at the meeting of the European Society of Ophthalmology in Amsterdam in 1968.

The most important report, however, was the International Classification of Ophthalmic Disorders, a most useful coding system based on a code devised by Franken (Utrecht), under the advice of a committee appointed by the International Council and finally prepared by Dr. J. Schappert-Kimmijser (The Hague), the Health Council of the Netherlands and Colenbrander (Leyden), assisted by François (Ghent). The scheme is in English, based on decimal coding on a topographical and pathological basis, running from 70 to 89 to fit in with the WHO code of general diseases. This was considered by the Council and accepted by the Federation and will shortly be published; it should be of immense value in correlating world-wide statistics of ophthalmic diseases in hospitals and practices in all countries.

The application of the following countries to join the International Federation was accepted: Syria, Iran, South Korea, Pakistan.

New Members of the Council and new Office-bearers for the next 4 years were accepted by the Federation as suggested by the Council. The new Council will thus be composed of the following members:

Hon. Life President, Duke-Elder (Great Britain)
President, Charalamis (Greece)
Vice-President, Pischel (U.S.A.)
Secretary, François (Belgium)
Treasurer, Streiff (Switzerland)
President of the International Association for the Prevention of Blindness, Franceschetti (Switzerland)
President of the International Organization against Trachoma, Bietti (Italy)
Representative of the Pan-American Association for Ophthalmology, MacLean (U.S.A.)
Representative of the European Society of Ophthalmology, François (Belgium)
Past-President of the Council, Vail (U.S.A.)
Past-President of the XXth International Congress, Müller (Germany)
President of the XXIst International Congress, not yet decided
Regional Members: von Bahr (Sweden), Böck (Austria), Casanovas (Spain), Nordmann (France), Sanchez (Mexico), Scott (Great Britain), Crock (Australia), Radnôt (Hungary), Cooper (India).

The invitation from Mexico to hold the XXIst International Congress in Mexico City in 1970 was accepted with acclamation.