

THE MEDICAL ASPECTS OF THE CONGRESS

By Montfort

The first National Congress of Students organized by the Students Representative Council was held from October 29 to November 1, 1953. The theme of the Congress was "The Status of the Students". The programme included Plenary Sessions, Faculty Sessions and an Exhibition of "Student Life in Malta".

The Exhibition which was held in the Examination Hall of the University was inaugurated by His Grace the Metropolitan Archbishop on Thursday, October 29, 1953. The stands of the different societies were well laid out and organized although with a little more preparation and a little more thought it would have been possible to do more justice to the very high standard of exhibits which were on show. The stand of the British Medical Students' Association was undoubtedly one of the main centres of attraction. Visitors were able to peer through microscopes and see such things as tubercle bacilli from a tuberculous sputum, red blood corpuscles from a normal blood smear, white blood corpuscles from a case of myeloid leukaemia, histology of the normal lung, and melanomatous tissue. A number of anatomy specimens were on show as well as such clinical and laboratory instruments as E.S.R. apparatus, sphygmomanometer, Haldane's and Sahli's Haemoglobinometer, Lovi-wend comparator, Thoma haemocytometer. B.S.R. apparatus and others. Short explanatory notes on each exhibit were present while at the same time students on duty at the stand were kept busy explaining to the people visiting the stand the intricacies and workings of the various specimens. Quite a large number of people availed themselves of

the invitation to have their blood pressure examined on request. Medical journals and periodicals, photographs of students at hospital as well as a photograph of Dr. Victor Captur, B.Sc., M.D., Founder and first President of the Malta Branch of the Association, were amongst other things on show.

The British Medical Students' Association was entrusted with the organization of the Medical Faculty Sessions of the Congress; these included a Pharmacy Session. These Sessions, which were held in the Aula Magna of the University, had as their theme the subject of "Post-graduate Employment". The principal speakers were Professor Walter Ganado, B. Sc., M.D., M.R.C.P., who spoke on "The Suggested Reforms in the Medical Profession in Malta", Professor A. J. Craig, B.Sc., M.D., F.R.C.S., who spoke on "Post-graduate Employment in Britain", Dr. J. Naudi, M.D., who spoke on "The Colonial Service", and Mr. A. Darmania, Ph.C., who spoke on "The Pharmacy Student after Graduating". Interesting discussions were held after each talk and at the end of the last session a number of resolutions were put forward and discussed. The following are the resolutions which were finally approved by the students:

1. That a reform in the set-up of the medical services in Malta is urgently required.

2. That a General Medical Council be set up for the purpose of controlling and exercising discipline amongst the members of the medical profession and for the purpose of advising the Government on all matters of medical policy and on all matters of interest to the

medical profession.

3. That a Hospitals Board be set up to advise the Government on matters affecting the Hospitals especially as regards administration, appointments, salaries and grievances from medical and allied personnel.

4. That a complete reform is necessary in the present system of remuneration for doctors, because as things stand at present no consideration is being given to the long and difficult training which a medical graduate has to undergo both before and after qualifying and no consideration is being given to the great and responsible services being given by doctors to the country.

5. That lady doctors should be given a salary equal to that of men doctors.

6. That as suggested by the local B.M.A. scheme of reform the fee of 2/6 for an ordinary visit be raised to 5/- and that practitioners should be asked either not to charge anything at all or else not to charge less than the official fee.

7. That as long as openings exist in the British Colonial Service, in the Services, in English Hospitals and elsewhere no steps should be taken to limit either the number of students joining a medical course or else the number of doctors qualifying.

8. That the Medical and Health Department be requested to ask for from the competent authorities and to furnish medical students with detailed information about conditions of work and pay in the Colonial Service.

9. That the Royal University of Malta be requested to press for the recognition of our local medical degree in all

the countries of the British Commonwealth and elsewhere and to inform medical students where such recognition already exists.

10. That the B.M.A. and the B.M.S.A. should inform and invite local parliamentarians, especially doctors, to take up the cause of the Assistant Resident Medical Officers.

11. That the salary of Assistant Resident Medical Officers should be raised to £300 in the first year, £360 in the second year and £420 in the third year.

12. That the Government and the Royal University should see to it that the degree of B. Pharm. be recognised throughout the British Commonwealth and in other countries.

13. That the Royal University of Malta should do everything possible to bring up to standard all the Science Laboratories including those for the study of Pharmaceutical and Medical subjects.

At the last Plenary Session of the Congress held in the Aula Magna of the University the Presidents of the different Faculties read out the resolutions passed by their respective Faculties. The above resolutions were read by the Vice-President of the local branch of the British Medical Students' Association and from the applause and the comments of those present it was more than clear that the suggestions put forward at the Medical Faculty Sessions of our first National Students' Congress had met the approval of the people present at the closing session of the Congress; and these included members of the Senate of the University, Professors, members of the various professions, students and friends.