

At the commencement of his paper, Dr. Munro explained the manner in which his attention had been called to the necessity of a better understanding between the surgeons and the public. "While listening some time ago," he said, "to an interesting address by Prof. Müller, of Munich, on the German system of insurance of the laboring classes against sickness and death, I was impressed by the fact that the insurance was established not as a charity but because the poor have the right to be protected against the various accidents and illnesses incident to our complex modern life. At that time it occurred to me that against unnecessary suffering, disease and death the public, both rich and poor, has an equal right to be protected by means other than that of insurance. In other words if modern surgery can lengthen life, can protect against malignancy, can nullify suffering better than can be accomplished by other therapeutic measures, the public has the right to know accurately when and to what extent this is possible."

Surgeons, he continued to explain, have been so busy watching developments that they had failed to let the people know what could be done for them. It was time, he thought, that the profession should stop and survey its relation to its clients. As for the rights of patients, he said that major operations should not be undertaken by men who had not taken special courses in surgery. The practice of hospitals in putting important work on young surgeons was condemned in the following word: "To attract students, to become popular or to shirk labor the surgeons of many hospitals delegate more or less operative work to immature and irresponsible house pupils; because of this the public suffers." Such action was described as almost criminal. It was stated, moreover, that in his dealings with a patient the surgeon should place the facts before him and allow the decision whether or not he should undergo an operation to remain open.

In concluding Dr. Munro expressed the opinion that the public should be made to realize that the dangers, remote and immediate from anaesthesia, the state of insensibility produced by the inhalation of drugs are very small. He also suggested certain changes in the method of choosing the staffs of hospitals. "A reform" in the constitution of our hospital staffs he believed to be necessary. Some such system as that in vogue in Germany should be adopted by our hospitals. As constituted at present, many of our public hospitals are overweighted by cumbersome staffs that could easily be reduced to a third or a sixth of the present number. As I have indicated, too, uniformity and permanency in the operating and ward staff is of utmost importance in obtaining good results.

The Association tendered its thanks to Dr. Munro.

During the session of the Military Surgical Section a very important contribution was made by Lt.-Col. Jones, D.G.M.S., of Ottawa.