

ORIGINAL PAPER

The work of the international homoeopathic council for the coming year^{☆,☆☆}

By George Burford, M.B.

Vice-President of the International Homoeopathic Council.

In this historic city we meet to add another act to its world-wide renown. But the achievement we have as our intent is not the confusion of war, but the white offspring of peace. We do not meet to consider the destruction of human lives, but to save them. Our overlord to-day is not the spirit of the illustrious Emperor Charles V, but that of the beneficent Hahnemann, who is the Perpetual President of every Homoeopathic Council the whole world over. Our call to this Assembly is to make homoeopathy the dominant practice of medicine. Our aim is one and indivisible; our methods of attaining it as various as the countries we represent. Here we have homoeopathy triumphant—there it is fighting for its existence and lives under a cloud. In one country it is developed as an organization and successful as a public blessing. In another country its establishments are as separate as though they were in different planets, and therefore its hold on public interest correspondingly weak. Well, therefore, may homoeopathy where it is less developed imbibe the spirit and the practical genius of the more flourishing centres. Well, therefore, may the greater homoeopathic settlements recall that the strength of the homoeopathic chain is as its weakest link, and that the strength of homoeopathy, as a whole, is exactly the associated strength of the homoeopathic parts. Thus the plan of our campaign is “*each for all and all for each*” and our order of the day the consolidation of fraternity.

We meet to make the wheels of homoeopathy course more quickly. But to advance we must have a definite idea of our immediate aim and to make our advances permanent we must work out the consecutive steps which will allow our aim to be materialized. But the base from which we work differs for every country. We cordially invite each homoeopathic delegate in this assembly to explain exactly how the Council as a whole can give a stimulus to the homoeopathy of his own country. It is not a description of what each would like to be achieved as an ideal. What is wanted is an enumeration of the necessary steps for the effective development of homoeopathy in each country here represented; and what each requires—as practical aid from the Council—for the forward movement that we are here assembled to carry on. To debate what to do and how to do it, for all countries in general, and each country in particular, is why we are here as a Homoeopathic Parliament. And as a time limit to our propositions, we have now to ordain our course of action for the next ensuing twelvemonth.

Now, however different may be the methods which the representatives of each country elect—with the support of the Council—for their own procedure, there are some main general requirements which are present everywhere; and the chief of these, by way of giving a lead to your considerations, I will here enumerate:

- (1) *There is the immediate, insistent and general requirement for the attraction of more physicians into the practice of homoeopathy.* This necessity stands at the very outset of our needs, it exists everywhere; and by our effectiveness or our ineffectiveness in meeting this paramount need homoeopathy will live or die. The delegates from various countries will tell us what is being done, or not being done, in the native land of each to increase the numbers of homoeopathic physicians. I may here say that, hitherto, this augmentation has been made by individuals rather than by societies. But cannot the concerted work of homoeopathic societies, made co-ordinate by this Council, increase and make easier the efforts of the active individuals among us to obtain new adherents?
- (2) *There is the consequential requirement of a luminous statement of the claims of homoeopathy on the consideration of the profession.* Now, whatever may be said as to the inefficacy of this procedure in time past, I hold that it is the chief impetus we may use to take the rising professional generation past the halfway house of vaccines and serums, where so many of the younger men stay who might be made conscious instead of unconscious homoeopaths. And such a text-book of the bases of homoeopathy should not be the product of only one, but of a dozen of the best minds among us, each taking a different line of demonstration.

*An Introductory Paper read at the meeting of the Council at Ghent, August 1913.

**This article is a reprint of a previously published article. For citation purposes, please use the original publication details; *Br Hom J* 1913; 3: 433–437.

- (3) *There is the necessity of putting on record a lucid and accurate account of what homoeopathy actually is for the intelligent educated members of society.* The name of homoeopathy is known the world over; but there is scarcely an encyclopaedia or a dictionary where the explanation of homoeopathy is not a falsity or a parody. Where have the intelligent classes to go for a clear notion of homoeopathy, except to those who also have no clear notion—I mean the orthodox professional men of the time? In religion, in science, in politics, the essentials of questions involving the common good are expounded by master minds, for the common good, and are available everywhere as literature. Why treat homoeopathy as a secret society, and ignore the call for enlightenment?
- (4) *There is the necessity for utilizing as object lessons of the value of homoeopathy to the State as many public institutions as possible,* these being chiefly, of course, hospitals. I go so far as to say homoeopathy is what its hospitals make it; and its progress may be measured by the hospitals it controls. See the value of the London Homoeopathic Hospital, with its 160 beds, to British homoeopathy. Note how the largest hospital in the world—that on Blackwell's Island—arose out of the determination of the New York homoeopaths to begin somewhere. Some vacated prison buildings were given them, and out of this unpromising beginning arose the present hospital with more than 60 homoeopathic physicians on its staff. I am glad to learn that Dr Thorson, who represents Denmark here to-day, has recently, with praiseworthy energy, inaugurated a new homoeopathic hospital in Copenhagen. Hospitals are the living witnesses of a homoeopathy that is alive.
- (5) *There is a definite requirement for a concerted and continuous experimental evolution of homoeopathy as a science.* No appreciable difference has been made to the experimental development of homoeopathy since Hahnemann laboured. In the meantime, new methods suspiciously like homoeopathic methods have arisen for producing immunity, and for effecting cure in microbic lesions, including tubercle. It is possible that the effective antagonism of malignant disease may be ultimately wrought out on the lines of heightening the protective mechanism of the body against the malignant cell. All the world is looking on at such laborious, but hitherto ineffective, researches into the problem of cure. And why, oh why, should not the honours fall to homoeopathy?

Finally, *we practise homoeopathy from the conviction that by it we can cure more safely, quickly and pleasantly than by other methods.* If this conviction is founded on fact, that fact must be expressed in the only possible way—by figures. It is useless to object that from the complexity of the subject figures are unreliable. Statisticians using mathematical methods deal effectively with more complex problems every day. We have hitherto quite failed to realize the enormous advantages that the statistics of our public institutions show are on the side of homoeopathy.

But the whole procedure should be made much more telling. Every homoeopathic hospital should issue at intervals of five to ten years a statistical report, and by the averaging of all, errors would be mutually excluded. This Council may well set itself to this task, and take the necessary steps to collect strictly verifiable homoeopathic statistics of results from the homoeopathic hospitals of the world.

These are some of the desirable procedures of a general kind which international homoeopathy might well under-take. Over and above these each country here represented will have its own special and particular suggestions for the way in which the Council can develop its national homoeopathy. Let us have these suggestions made clearly and vividly; they will fall on sympathetic ears, and give the executive precisely the detail which it requires.

Now, in order to give these requisitions a sufficiently practical turn, the Council has had prepared in the official languages a precis of the work it has actually undertaken during the last year. It is not intended that deliberations should be confined to the subjects included in the precis. This resume is merely given to show the kind of work the Congress machinery is now able to perform.

But the whole world is our province, and may we know no rest in the great work to which we have set our hands.