

Council and Officers, 1909-'10

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American Association for Cancer Research

Office of Secretary

University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, Pa.

The American Association for Cancer Research, a body including in its membership the principal cancer investigators of the United States, represented by its Council in meeting assembled, did, on the 27th day of November, 1909, pass the following resolution:

WHEREAS, having seen in the public prints the statement that The President will shortly recommend to Congress, the formation of a National Bureau of Health, to be composed of the existing medical bureaus of the Government, to which shall be added such others as may seem necessary, it is therefore,

RESOLVED, that we urge upon the President the expediency and importance of including in the new Bureau of Health a Department for Cancer Research, and offer in support of this resolution the following facts:

Cancer is a disease which, according to statistics the world over, is increasing to a remarkable degree. During the period covered by the last census of this Government, the disease appears to have increased 28 per cent. In the German Empire from 1892 to 1899 cancer increased 24.3 per cent, in Italy 25.5 per cent, in Norway 39.1 per cent, in England and Wales 24.2 per cent, in Holland 26.7 per cent, in Switzerland 11.7 per cent, in France 18.5 per cent, in Sweden 11.4 per cent, in Denmark 20.5 per cent. The increase of population during this period averages about 10 per cent.

Without considering to what this increase may be due, whether it is apparent or real, it is gradually raising cancer to the status of one of our most important diseases. That this increase has unquestionably continued, is shown by the fact that in the State of New York during the last thirteen years, cancer had increased 29 per cent, whereas tuberculosis during this period has decreased 9 per cent. The actual deaths from cancer in the State of New York have now reached a point where they are annually about half as many as the deaths from tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is today accorded the recognition which its importance demands, but cancer is just beginning to be systematically studied, and deserves much greater consideration than it is as yet receiving.

It is with pleasure that The American Association for Cancer Research points to the very early and successful work done by American investigators in this field. The advances of the past ten years are due to the inauguration of the experimental method of investigation, and it may safely be said that more progress has been made in this last period than in the preceding twenty-five years. Americans have taken a very early, practically an initial part in this work. Experimental work in cancer was undertaken by an American investigator, one of our members, as early as 1902, before the advent of similar work in Europe. The first institution exclusively devoted to the investigation of cancer was established in this country by the State of New York in 1898 and it has been the prototype of several foreign institutions devoted to the same cause. There are today several centers in which cancer research is being actively pursued, but we feel that this work will be greatly strengthened in many directions, by a Bureau of Cancer Research as part of the Department of Health.

The British, following the initiative of this country, have founded an Imperial Cancer Research Fund, endowed with more than three million dollars. Their organization includes intimate relations with the Colonial Office of the British Government and they have been able to collect records and statistics of great value from the most widely distributed parts of the earth. The states of Prussia and Baden are both supporting institutions for cancer research and the Russian Government maintains a similar institution in Moscow; all of these established since the foundation of the first special institution in America. In many respects these Government institutions, possess great advantages over private institutions, especially in the matter of obtaining improved statistics relating to cancer, and special facilities through the various coordinate branches of the Government.

In consideration of the growing economic importance of cancer as a disease, and the honorable position which American research occupies in this field, we feel that the formation of a National Bureau of Health should properly include a Department for Cancer Research, in order that this country may be placed upon at least as advanced a footing as the leading States of Europe. For this reason we heartily recommend to the consideration of The President the desirability of including in the new Bureau of Health a Department for Cancer Investigation.