

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1948

ST. LOUIS INTERIM SESSION

This issue of THE JOURNAL calls special attention to some of the features of the Interim Session of the Association to be held in St. Louis Nov. 30-Dec. 3, 1948. The features of this session include a graduate educational program, technical and scientific exhibits, general meetings of unusual quality and one evening devoted wholly to entertainment. The House of Delegates will hold its sessions and, as a new departure, the annual reports of officers and Board of Trustees will be considered in the Interim Session rather than in the Annual Session.

Attention is called particularly to the nature of the graduate educational program which has already been described in THE JOURNAL and which is unique. There will be discussions each morning and each afternoon, after which the audience will go in groups of about a hundred to separate halls, where consideration will be given to certain aspects of the subject discussed with presentation of cases. At the same time the scientific exhibits will make available the laboratory material used in such studies as well as other exhibits. The general meetings will include the award of the General Practitioner Medal and addresses by distinguished speakers. The evening of entertainment has been supplied by one of the advertisers in THE JOURNAL and includes the stars of a series of radio programs who are famous in the United States. Attendance at the entertainment will be limited to physicians and their families registered at the session and is not open to the general public.

The Technical Exhibit occupies all the space available in the auditorium and represents demonstrations of the new drugs, the new devices, the new books and other developments in medicine since the Annual Session last June.

The timing of all of these programs has been so arranged as to give ample opportunity for those registered in the session to participate in each of the sessions and also to visit both the scientific and the technical exhibits.

Already the registrations in hotels in St. Louis indicate a large attendance, but there will be ample space for others who send immediately for their hotel reservations.

THE ADVERTISING OF CIGARETTES

For some years THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, the state medical journals and most other medical publications have carried the advertisements of the various companies that manufacture cigarettes. Actual surveys indicate that the majority of physicians themselves smoke cigarettes. Extensive scientific studies have proved that smoking in moderation by those for whom tobacco is not specifically contraindicated does not appreciably shorten life. Postmortem examinations do not reveal lesions in any number of cases that could be definitely traced to the smoking of cigarettes. From a psychologic point of view, in all probability more can be said in behalf of smoking as a form of escape from tension than against it. Several scientific works have been published that have assembled the evidence for and against smoking, and there does not seem to be any preponderance of evidence that would indicate the abolition of the use of tobacco as a substance contrary to the public health. Physicians are no doubt familiar with the articles that have been published on the effects of tobacco on the circulation, the blood, the gastric acidity and other physiologic mechanisms within the human body. This editorial will not attempt to summarize that evidence or to derive any positive conclusions from it. It is concerned, rather, with the manner in which leading manufacturers have begun to lean so heavily on reference to the medical profession in promoting their products.

The advertising accepted by THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION has always been screened through various committees, and the evidence in behalf of the statements made has seemed to be sufficient to warrant the statements that appear in the advertisements. Gradually, however, claims point more and more toward the single factor of the extent to which certain cigarettes irritate the throat. One product is said to be less irritating than others, and the suggestion is made that persons who suffer irritation from other cigarettes try the one that is said to be less irritating. Another is said to be always milder; a third is said to be absolutely free from throat irritation as based on tests conducted under the supervision of physicians.

From time to time the manufacturers have sought for some positive chemical or physical factor related to the extent of irritation of the mucous membranes of the throat, and evidence and newer knowledge concerning growing, curing and blending have been accumulated in behalf of their contention.

Readers must remember that the cigarette business is a tremendous business and one that has increased continuously in volume for many years. The consumption of cigarettes has increased from approximately 10