

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome the members of the S.A. Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences. to this conference at Rhodes. The fact that you represent the academic rather than the business aspects of your profession, is borne out by both the absence of executive jet aircraft at our aerodrome, and by the large number of papers coming from the ranks of a comparatively small and intimate society. Your academic orientation automatically includes you in the kinship of the impecunious but interesting family to which all universities belong. As pharmacists, you represent the section of your profession which knows that a culture is not only found in vitro.

It is common practice, in Education, for a lecturer introducing the first course of a subject to tell his students something about the history and scope of that subject accompanied, very often, by a concise definition. There is much to be said for this practice. It is tantamount to allowing a channel swimmer one long look at the water before him, and also at his distant objective, before he plunges in and becomes immersed in his struggle with the waves. Never again, at any later moment, will he be able to take a detached view of his field of endeavour from a clear vantage point and with his sight and his thoughts unclouded by the subjective experience of his situation.

It is no different for men who enter a profession. They are attracted to it, in the first place, by an outsider's view of the profession as personified by its practising members, and are persuaded to commit themselves to a course of study which ultimately qualifies them, also, for admission to its ranks. Even during their studies, the outside view that originally attracted them will begin to fade in their memories, as the city of gold in the distance comes closer, and turns out to be a reality of hard concrete. And once taken up in the ranks of the profession, entailed in routine practices and procedures, gradually finding monetary income to be as satisfying as professional output, they become completely engrossed in the waves and currents of their careers and completely forget that long look, years ago, at the complete scope and potential of their vocation.

Is there any way in which that sad little story can be given a happier ending? Is there any way in which the active performer, engrossed in his art, could be kept aware of the outsider's view of his place in his vocation, and of the place occupied by his profession in the wide field of human endeavour? That wider view is surely available only to those who remain at the remote and lofty viewpoint from where the full panorama of the field of activity can be watched and evaluated. And is this not precisely the role played in every profession by its members who serve in the academic field, who do not become embroiled in the competitive life of the private sector, and who can view and evaluate their profession with detached objectivity? And having assessed the winds and the currents, and the drifts of the profession in whatever direction, are they not in the best position to guide the progress and future of their profession in two ways:

Firstly, by attuning the education of their students to move them, in outlook and attitude, away from the dangerous currents and in the optimum direction for future progress and achievement: and secondly, by maintaining their contact with the active practitioners in their profession, both through refresher courses and in the activities of the professional organisation, and influencing their thoughts and their actions. In this way the academic section of any profession should be at one and the same time the anchor holding the profession to the best of its traditions, and the sentinel on the coastline, warning the ships of storms and currents and guiding them safely on their chosen course.

This is particularly necessary in the case of the Pharmaceutical profession, for the pharmacist is doomed from the outset, especially in the retail field, to go through life with a split personality - a white-coated scientist in the role of a shopkeeper. Here, as in no other profession, is there a constant need of guidance and persuasion to maintain a delicate balance between two divergent and discordant aspects of the professional character and outlook of the active practitioner. And this need underlines, to me, the importance of your organisation.

Maar om op te tree as waghond oor die aptekers-professie sal ook baie groot wysheid vereis. Neem as voorbeeld die verkoop van algemene handelware deur die apteker. Aan die een kant is dit jammer dat, terwyl die dokter of advokaat 'n rekening kan stuur vir professionele dienste, die apteker sy professionele vergoeding moet verkry uit 'n handels-profyt. Aan die ander kant sou baie van ons kleiner dorpe sonder 'n apteek gewees het, omrede die geringe aanvraag na medisyne, as die apteker nie 'n handelaar was nie wat sy inkomste kan aanvul uit die verkoop van algemene handelware. Ek glo nie dat enige ander beroep met sulke ingeboude teenstrydighede te kampe het nie.

'n Mens moet nogtans nie te gou wees om te kla oor jou lot nie. Daar is die storie van 'n apteker op 'n klein dorp wat eendag vir die dokter gesê het: "Ek voel seer om te dink dat ek vir soveel jaar Wetenskap studeer het, en nou is ek 'n winkelier wat medisyne van 'n rak afhaal en aan pasiënte oorhandig." "Toemaar", sê die dokter, "nadat ek vir jare medisyne studeer het, is ek nou die kantoor-klerk wat die bestellings vir jou medisyne uit-skryf."

So bestaan daar altyd 'n plek vir iemand wat vir mense kan help om 'n beter perspektief te hê van hul rol in die lewe.

Believing thus that your organisation has a most important function to fulfil in service to the pharmaceutical profession, may I wish you all a happy stay at Rhodes, and great success in your deliberations.

I hereby declare this ^{Annual} first conference of Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences open.