

## **THE EARLY STAGES OF CHRONIC BRONCHITIS**

### **WELCOME**

**Dr H. N. Levitt, O.B.E.** (*Chairman of Council, The College of General Practitioners*)

**L**ADIES and gentlemen, I shall not take a lot of time in opening this symposium. I will merely say that it has been most gratifying to have received the support we have been given from Beechams, without any strings attached. I know that when you 'dine' with pharmaceutical companies you want a long spoon; but this support has been given without any strings attached, and the meeting has been sponsored without any conditions at all. We were given a completely free hand, to the extent that even certain drugs with proprietary names have not been mentioned—if you feel there is a better drug, do not hesitate to say so. Without more ado, I will call upon Mr Wilkins, chairman of the Beecham Research Laboratories to speak.

**Mr G. J. Wilkins** (*Chairman, Beecham Research Laboratories*)

May I welcome you to this symposium and thank you for giving up so much of your valuable time. I am sure that the subject under review is worthy of your attention and I sincerely hope that the proceedings will give further impetus to the solution of some of the many problems which attend the management of chronic bronchitis.

It is undoubtedly appropriate that this symposium is taking place in an institution renowned throughout the world for its devotion to medical research. We are particularly grateful to the dean of the school of postgraduate studies for his generous permission to use this magnificent lecture theatre. I should also like to add our grateful thanks for the willing co-operation of his staff in making the various arrangements. For some years now I have read with

growing admiration of the various activities of the College of General Practitioners. It seems to me that the College fulfils a vital purpose in promoting educational facilities for the busy general practitioner, and, particularly, in conducting research into some of his more pressing problems.

This meeting is very largely due to the personal initiative and enthusiasm of today's chairman, Dr Levitt; and I should like to congratulate him and the College on bringing together so many distinguished speakers to address you from this platform. We at the Beecham Research Laboratories believe that it is both the privilege and the duty of pharmaceutical companies to encourage a free interchange of technical and scientific information between members of the medical profession.

We have already demonstrated our support of this principle by our sponsorship of the film which you will see in a few minutes time.

The opportunities of being associated with a symposium of this kind are, of course, very rare. When I was asked by the College if my Company would sponsor this meeting and the objectives were explained to me, I was very happy to accept the responsibility, because we feel that a real attempt is being made to grapple with problems of vital interest to every practising physician, and also to my Company as well. By the end of the day I hope that much will have been achieved, and that the verbatim report of the proceedings which we hope to publish in due course will give you a lasting record of the ideas which have been expressed. I can do no more than wish the symposium every success in achieving its objectives.

A film entitled *Bronchitis—a team affair*, was then shown.

**Chairman:** When we devised today's programme we thought it was illogical to start by showing Act III on what had happened to a patient. In fact, the majority of people here know what is entailed in this film—Act III. We thought it was much more important to start looking behind us in this clinical problem and see whether we could arrive at some kind of answer to the onset of this disease, of which there is such an increasing amount in our population. As regards the economics of this disease in a society where £2,000 million is spent on the defence programme, we might remind ourselves of the National Health Insurance statement that this disease costs the country £60 million per annum; it would not seem improper or unreasonable to pursue its aetiology in every detail.

We asked Professor Scadding to pose a number of questions as to whether we are going in the right direction in the matter of research and treatment. On a personal note, I should like to thank Professor Scadding for coming to speak to us.