

### THIRD SESSION

#### OPENING REMARKS

**Dr Annis Gillie** (*President of the Royal College of General Practitioners*)

Ladies and gentlemen, here we come to the final session of this extraordinarily interesting symposium. I am going to hand over to Dr Barton who is a generous friend to the College, visiting faculties and always making a great contribution to the value of symposia.

## Commonsense, Science and Psychiatry

**Dr Russell Barton, M.B., M.R.C.P., D.P.H.** (*Severalls Hospital, Colchester, Essex*)

Dr Barton presented his paper.

### Discussion

**Dr Mackie** (*Oldmeldrum*): They say psychotherapy is like confession. Can Dr Henderson tell us of any difference in the psychoneurosis rates of Roman Catholics and other denominations? How far are we invading the territory of the minister in the minor psychoneurotic states?

**Dr Henderson**: There are interesting variations concerning the incidence of psychiatric disturbances among various religious groups. As I see it, the rôle of the psychiatrist and the rôle of the minister are complementary. I welcome ministers who wish to discuss the problems they have with members of their flock. The short answer is that I do not think we interfere with religion; we certainly respect and invite the advice and skills of the ministries.

**Dr D. D. B. MacKellar** (*Dumbarton*): In order to prevent alcoholism, what attitudes to drinking would you try and instil in young people—for example, total abstinence or moderate drinking, as (a) a parent, (b) their general practitioner, (c) their youth club leader, (d) their clergyman?

**Dr Whittet**: I think I am old-fashioned. I think that parents shirk too many responsibilities or are encouraged to do so by other people. I feel that teaching about alcoholism must begin in the home. When considered to be old enough, children should be introduced to a glass of wine or sherry on an appropriate occasion. At the same time, and many parents can do it skilfully, introduce the element of warning about excess, about dangers other than complete alcoholism. I myself think that this is perhaps the only way in which it can be effectively done, reinforced by precept and example from the parents. The best way to produce children who are alcoholics is to have a home where there is an attitude of bigoted teetotalism on the one hand, or alcohol flowing like water on the other.