

Chapter 8

1973–1977

President: W.A. Cobb

During the Fiscal Period, under the able leadership of President William Cobb (Fig. 8.1), three new Societies were admitted to membership, those from East Germany, Brazil and, just in time for the Congress, Chile, bringing the total to 40. This is not to say that all 40 were equally active in the membership; it was always a matter of surprise that a delegate elected for the sole purpose of keeping his society in contact with the Federation should repeatedly fail to vote or to answer requests for opinion or advice; thus, at a time when there were 38 members, only 21 made a nomination for President, and only 12 answered a ballot on an increase of the annual subscription, both matters which seem to be of some consequence. Out of 11 items submitted to the Council in a 3-year period one society never replied and several answered only two or three times. Despite many efforts to encourage or coerce the backsliders the problem still continues. Contrary to all expectation and against a background of inflation of the order of 28% for the 4 years the financial affairs of the Federation flourished. This was due to a number of factors.

1. Following the proposal of the Treasurer (Hess) in 1973 the Council agreed to increase the annual subscription by 50%. More societies paid up on time (it is not surprising that some were generally as bad at this as at voting) and the yield was \$55,000, against the budgeted \$32,000.
2. According to custom (and the Statutes) the two international congresses, EEG in Marseilles and EMG in Rochester, handed over

their profits, which were considerably larger than anticipated (\$19,000 against \$11,000).

3. The Journal made a large profit (\$66,000), more than double the amount foreseen.
4. The Treasurer, Max Dondey, brought to his task an expertise to which we were not accustomed, largely countering the effects of inflation and the devaluation of the American dollar and ending with a capital increase of \$26,000.

From about half way through the Fiscal Period the minutes show that the President was constantly reminding his colleagues that the Federation was a non-profit making organization and that we must find ways of returning to the members the surplus, which was beginning to be substantial. A start was made with a more generous, though still very cautious, grant to the EMG Congress, and nearly \$14,000 was paid in support of the Handbook office. Later, when the financial situation was more evident, the subvention to the coming Congress was increased to \$55,000 and still later it was decided to remit the admission fees of invited speakers and members of Federation committees and half the fees of a number of young workers (under 35) chosen by their societies, at the rate of one grant for 20 members; the cost of these two last operations was \$36,000.

A further scheme, which made a slow start but continues, was to present the Journal to impoverished libraries or departments which would not otherwise see it. This was later modified to give the Handbook, which seemed more



Fig. 8.1. From left to right:

- R. Hess of Zurich. Treasurer 1969–1973.
- W.A. Cobb of London. Treasurer 1957–1961, European and Managing Editor 1962–1973, President 1973–1977, Publications Manager 1977–1981, Publications Editor 1981–1985.
- Pierre Gloor of the Montreal Neurological Institute. Editorial Assistant to Jasper 1954–1958, Translator and author of “*Hans Berger on the Electroencephalogram*”.
- J. Kugler of Munich. Member-at-large 1977–1981.

suites to a developing laboratory and would not involve a long-term commitment.

The Federation had always assumed itself to be tax-exempt, on the grounds of being a non-profit making body, but now that its capital had increased considerably and was invested worldwide it was found that we were paying significant taxes. Some of the money was still invested in Canada, where it had remained since the sale of the Journal stock to Elsevier; the Canadian authorities stated that it could not be tax-exempt unless it was so in France, the country in which the Federation was registered. Here it was found that our supposed registration was invalid because it had not been published initially in the “*Journal Officiel*”. When we (that is, Bobby Naquet on the Federation’s behalf) tried to put that right we were told that an item in the Statutes was not acceptable, since the legal address of the Federation was not necessarily in France. Statute IV said: “The address of the Head Office of the Federation is that of the current resident.” In the French version “*siège social*” has a rather more limited meaning than head office. Since the Statute could not be changed before the next General

Assembly a new Bye-Law was passed by the Council in May 1976, followed by the definitive change in the Statute in September 1977. It stated that:

- (1) “The legal address of the Federation is in France. It is specified in the Bye-Laws.
- (2) The administrative address of the Federation is that of the current President.”

These changes were duly registered in the “*Journal Officiel*” and the Federation became respectable again, at the cost of many months of effort by the Treasurer and the Rules Committee.

The EMG Commission and its various committees, under the leadership of EMG Commissioner Albrecht Struppler (Fig. 8.2), were active in gathering information on standards of training, terminology, etc., though this was not to bear fruit (i.e., reports) until the following Congress. The Fifth International EMG Congress was organized with the American Association of EMG and Electrodiagnosis at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, USA in September 1975. The President, whose right it was to be chairman of the Organizing Committee, felt that this was not very realistic at the distance involved and, as the Bye-Laws permit, deputed the task to the Secretary in



Fig. 8.2.

- Helmut Petsche (left) of Vienna. Member-at-large 1973–1977.
- Albrecht Struppeler (right) of Munich. Chairman of EMG Commission 1973–1977.

Omaha, a short flight away. In fact, all arrangements were made by Ed Lambert with his usual lack of fuss and correspondence; even the secretary of the Organizing Committee said he did not know what was going on; our natural anxiety was needless and the Congress was well organized and well attended.

It was always the policy, according to the Statutes, that the Federation could recognize only one society in each country, later modified to allow a second with a different sphere of interest. The President was therefore surprised to receive, early in 1977, an invitation from the chairman of the Polish Society of EEG and Clinical Neurophysiology to its inaugural meeting; he had just checked that this was not the name of the society which had long been a member, nor were the officers the same, when he had to correct the manuscript of the proceedings of the Electrophysiological Section of the Polish Neurological Society, again bearing the name of a different secretary. Thus it seemed that there were three Polish EEG Societies, all wishing to make use of the Federation, but only one could be legitimate. A round of correspondence with those concerned, capped by personal meetings at the Congress, resolved all the problems, the members of the two sections resigning to join the autonomous new society, which in due course became the accepted member of the Federation.

For a number of years the Japanese Society had been offering to host a Congress, which we felt to be unacceptable because Japan was believed to be the most expensive country in the world and was certainly, on average, the most expensive of the member countries to reach. However, the Japanese were very persistent and perhaps the improved finances of the Federation made us more receptive; by the time of the Congress it was clear that many members of the General Assembly liked the idea but it was agreed to wait on the plans of the World Federation of Neurology.

The election of the Executive Committee was again conducted in two phases by C. Ajmone Marsan; first the President, Robert Naquet, then the Secretary and Treasurer, again the highly successful Robert Ellingson and Max Dondey respectively; the EMG chairman, J. Desmedt and the Member-at-Large, J. Kugler of Munich. The committee was completed by the Past-president W.A. Cobb and the Editor-in-Chief Mary Brazier.

1. The EEG Journal

In contrast with the previous period the story of this one is of a continuous fight against increasing publication delays, because of a backlog of papers waiting their turn. This was in part due to a change in printing method to computer type setting; though inherently quicker than more traditional methods, this at first produced rather fewer words per page and did not use a small type face for Clinical and Technical Notes and Society Proceedings, resulting in each number containing substantially fewer words than before. Combined with an increased input of papers and despite a high rejection rate this caused an ever lengthening publishing delay. A return to small print and the use of extra pages had nearly brought the situation under control again by the end of the period.

The abstracts of the Marseilles Congress had been published as an extra (13th) number, which naturally added to the cost of distribution. On this occasion the October number was used, the

normal contents of which had been accommodated in extra pages in the previous three numbers, thus speeding up their publication, an arrangement which, initially, was strongly resisted by the Editor-in-Chief but ended to everyone's satisfaction.

Just before the Congress the final 39th part of the Handbook was published, leaving only the Index to be completed. No one had anticipated that it would take 8 years to finish or that the office expenses would amount to something like \$40,000. Eventually all this money, which had been advanced initially by Elsevier, later by the Federation, was repaid from the profits from sales of the book, which still continue in a small way at the time of writing.

By no means all the member Societies make use of Society Proceedings though they have the right to do so. Even so, these take up a considerable amount of Journal space and at this time there was some pressure to limit them severely or even abolish the section completely. The majority opinion, however, has always been that they represent the common platform for all society members and must be retained whatever the pressure on space. Early in the Fiscal Period a compromise was reached: to reduce the words per abstract from 250 to 200 and to make a small charge to non-member societies for the inclusion of their proceedings. This last was rather with the intention of establishing that the free service was open only to Member Societies than with any hope of making a significant profit.

2. The Ninth International Congress, Amsterdam

As soon as it was known that the World Neurological Congress had chosen Amsterdam, the choice for the EEG Congress was clear; thus it was that our Congress preceded (September 4–9th) that of the International League against Epilepsy (10th) and the Neurological Congress (11–16th). Some joint sessions were held on the ninth with the epileptologists but otherwise the organizations were largely independent; that all

three congresses were in the same building was particularly attractive to the commercial exhibitors. This building was the excellent RAI Congress Centre, the first time that such a purpose-built centre had been used for our Congress, which had by now outgrown the facilities that could be provided by universities and the like. However, the general organization was still provided by the local organizing committee, and it was perfect, but it did strain resources severely and in future the organization would be in the hands of professionals.

At an early date Simon Visser was chosen as Convener, Fernando Lopes da Silva as Secretary and Joost Jonkman as Treasurer. Later, as the statutes require, an honorary president had to be elected but the Dutch Society could not make a choice between Otto Magnus and Willem Storm van Leeuwen, so both were elected, to everyone's pleasure.

At the Boston congress of 1953 the use of poster presentations had been tried and largely forgotten. It was attempted again in Amsterdam to a limited extent, with very encouraging results. Of the 582 free communications actually presented 54 were on posters (and four on film). An attempt was made to group the oral presentations to form common topics to be introduced by an invited short lecture by the chairman of the session. This worked out well on the whole though the problems of making up the program were considerable, made no easier by the failure of 54 speakers to arrive.

As had been the case in Marseilles, large numbers of abstracts of free communications arrived after the deadline, but since they also represented subscriptions they had to be accepted up to the last possible moment.

Some time before the Congress it became apparent that expenses would be covered, and ways were sought of returning some of the profits to the participants, mainly in the form of free entertainment. In particular, no charge was finally made for the splendid concert by the "Concertgebouw Orkest", conducted by Bernard Haitink.

Another memorable event was a reception by the mayor and aldermen of Amsterdam in the Rijksmuseum.

In his address to the General Assembly the President drew attention to the recent deaths of Lord Adrian and Grey Walter and also, most

untimely, of Michael Saunders, who had served the Federation well as its first Member-at-Large and Chairman of the Rules Committee. The invited lectures of the Congress were subsequently published as *Supplement 34, Contemporary Clinical Neurophysiology*.