

Chapter 2

1949–1953

President: H.H. Jasper

At this time financial problems played a major role. The Journal was struggling to reach profitability, hindered by the difficulty of collecting and transmitting subscriptions from Europe to Boston, and transatlantic travel was beyond the reach of the majority. Although a fair number of Americans had been able to get to Paris the reverse journey from Europe to America for the next congress seemed likely to present greater difficulties. For this reason an early decision was taken to postpone the congress by one year, to 1953, and associate it in time with the International Physiological Congress, to be held in Montreal in September, in the hope that this would improve the attendance. Thus the four yearly cycle of congresses and later the Fiscal Period of the Federation were established.

All the affairs of the Federation had to be conducted by letter and there was much correspondence between the President Herbert Jasper (Fig. 2.1) and the Secretary Henri Gastaut, culminating in three important events. The applications for membership of the so-called affiliated societies were accepted; they were the Spanish, Italian, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, Belgian, Swiss, Japanese, German (FRG) and South (later called Latin) American societies. Memories of the World War were still strong five years after its end and the admission of the German and Japanese societies was not unopposed but the majority view was that the Federation was concerned only with Science and Medicine, not with politics.

The Constitution as published in 1951 (Journal, 3: 519–522) incorrectly states “Incorporated, Paris 1949”. In fact the Federation was a Registered Charity, and registration took place with the deposition in 1951 of the Statutes in the Préfecture de Bouches du Rhône. For a long time the legal address of the Federation was that of the Secretary, Gastaut’s house on the Promenade de la Corniche in Marseilles. It remained so after he had ceased to be secretary and after he had left it; this anomaly was corrected only fairly recently, when tax avoidance compelled a more realistic arrangement. In 1950 the Federation became a founder member of the Council for the Coordination of International Congresses of Medical Sciences (CCICMS, later CIOMS) and the change in date of the next congress was in part a first fruit of this. Modest financial support was also provided by CIOMS for some of the Federation’s activities.

Gastaut’s report to the General Assembly of 1953 states that “Article VI (of the Statutes) was changed at the meeting of CIOMS”, but it is difficult to see how this could have been done constitutionally nor is there any indication of the nature of the change. Subsequent correspondence, however, indicates that the phrase “The General Assembly is composed of all the officers of the member societies” was dropped as it had become impractical with the growth of the Federation (though the phrase remains unchanged in the version of the Statutes published in the Journal, 1958, 10: 381–384). Instead each society was invited to name one delegate and these, with the officers, formed the General Assembly.



Fig. 2.1. Herbert H. Jasper of the Montreal Neurological Institute, first Federation President, proponent of the International 10–20 system, founder and first editor of *Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology*.

In June 1952 Jasper convened a meeting of these national delegates in Brussels and 13 of the societies were represented, only Japan being absent. This was, I think, the only occasion on which such a meeting, apart from those associated with congresses, was held; how it was financed is not apparent. The major topic was the provisional program of the coming congress made by the American organizers; Journal affairs were also discussed.

In May 1950 Jasper had proposed setting up three committees, on Apparatus, Clinical Techniques and Terminology. Gastaut objected that the Statutes allowed only two, though Statute X says “Special committees, in unlimited numbers, may be appointed.” The reason for the misunderstanding is not evident but it seems to have been resolved and the committees were appointed.

Although Statute IX says that “Each member association shall pay to the Federation an annual assessment . . .”, no serious attempt seems to have been made to collect any dues until September 1952, when the Treasurer, Rémond, sent out a circular letter proposing annual contributions from the various societies, ranging from \$100 (USA) to \$10; the societies were invited to object if they thought these arbitrary assessments were wrong. There is no evidence that they did so and by the end of the period the majority of dues had been paid and the Treasurer had a small sum to pass on to his successor.

1. The EEG Journal

In March 1951 negotiations were opened with the American Physiological Society to take over the publication of the Journal. This body already published a number of well known journals, including the *American Journal of Physiology* and *Physiological Reviews*, and so had the necessary organization to be able to take one more journal in its stride. The Society was helpful but made conditions which, though acceptable to Jasper and Schwab, those most closely concerned, must have been rejected by the majority since no agreement was reached.

Instead, the business affairs of the Journal were moved later in 1951 from Boston to Montreal, where a Managing Secretary was appointed. This does not seem to have been entirely successful because Jasper reports later that “the business management of our affairs was badly handled in 1953” but things were finally sorted out by a new Managing Secretary, Mrs. L. Denton, with the help of Margaret Jasper.

Meanwhile the Journal continued to grow, both in number of pages (632 in 1953) and in subscriptions, nearly 2000. Costs, however, were continually rising and the Journal had not quite reached profitability nor had most of the starting loans, intended to be for not more than 3 years, been paid off.

The continuing debt was in part due to an over estimate of the sales of *Supplement 1*. This was a “Bibliography of Electroencephalography” by Mary Brazier, published in 1950, which covered the period to 1948 and was to prove invaluable to EEG workers for many years to come. However, it was a financial burden on the struggling Journal and Jasper tried to shift the load of \$1566 to the Federation; not having anything like that amount of money the Federation declined.

In his first annual report of January 1950, after the publication of the first four quarterly numbers, totalling 524 pages, Jasper was able to report 1350 subscriptions, about double the more pessimistic estimates. Despite all the voluntary help the expenses of starting up the Journal had been

heavier than expected and the necessary finances had been generously provided by interest-free loans from some American and Canadian colleagues to the extent of \$5500; they were to be repaid within 3 years. The subscription was \$8; \$5 to society members!

Supplement 2, the *Proceedings of the Second Congress*, after much discussion, was published by Masson in Paris. The main reason for this seems to have been that a substantial French government grant to the Congress would have been withdrawn if the publication had not been in France. Several later supplements were published under the same imprint though their association with the Federation seems to have been of the slightest and did not include either editorial control or financial interest.

2. The Third International Congress, Boston

Under the presidency of Alexander Forbes the third Congress was held in Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA from 17 to 22 August, 1953. A complete list of the officers can be found in *Supplement 3* of the Journal from which it may be supposed that the indefatigable Bob Schwab, assisted by Mary Brazier, Earl Walker, Charles Henry and Jerome Merlis, were the chief organizers. This publication also has a list of societies which made financial contributions and one wonders who it was persuaded the College of Chest Physicians that it had an interest.

There were six symposia, each with three main speakers; these were later published, with the discussions, as *Supplement 4* of the Journal. The free communications were given in the form of panel presentations and 300 word abstracts of these, with one figure, were prepared for distribution at the congress, forming *Supplement 3* of the Journal. The cost of this was defrayed by including advertisements.

A meeting of the so-called General Assembly took place on the Sunday before the Congress opened, with Jasper in the chair. Twenty people were present, seven of them from the host country

and the remainder from 11 member societies. It is doubtful if all of them were truly delegates though a great effort had been made that every society should be represented. Minutes of the meeting were kept by Schwab, the secretary of the Congress, rather than by Gastaut, the secretary of the Federation, probably because the meeting was conducted largely in English, though Gastaut read his report in French. A typescript of these minutes exists but it was never published.

Gastaut described the development of the Federation during the preceding 4 years, the development of its Constitution and its relations with CIOMS. He also mentioned that he had organized transport to the Congress for 64 Europeans, a number which had been whittled away by cancellations and an air transport strike to zero. Other Europeans had of course made their own arrangements and many had succeeded in reaching Boston.

One of the victims of these disasters was the Treasurer, Rémond, and his report was read and discussed in his absence. The problems of transmitting funds from one country to another at this time were still considerable and it was proposed to set up the treasury permanently in the USA, though it is hard to see how this would have helped; it was pointed out that the country of the Treasurer would change every 4 years and the site of the treasury must necessarily change with him. A committee of five national treasurers was set up to discuss the problems of the international transfer of funds and the avoidance of liability to taxation.

Two small changes in Statute V were then made, making it possible for the representative of each member society in the Executive Committee to be “designated” by his society rather than “elected annually” and removing the restriction on the number of Vice-Presidents.

A “slate” of officers was next presented and, after discussion in “a general and friendly way,” was accepted, though in later years such a method of block election was to be heavily and rightly criticized. The number of Vice-Presidents

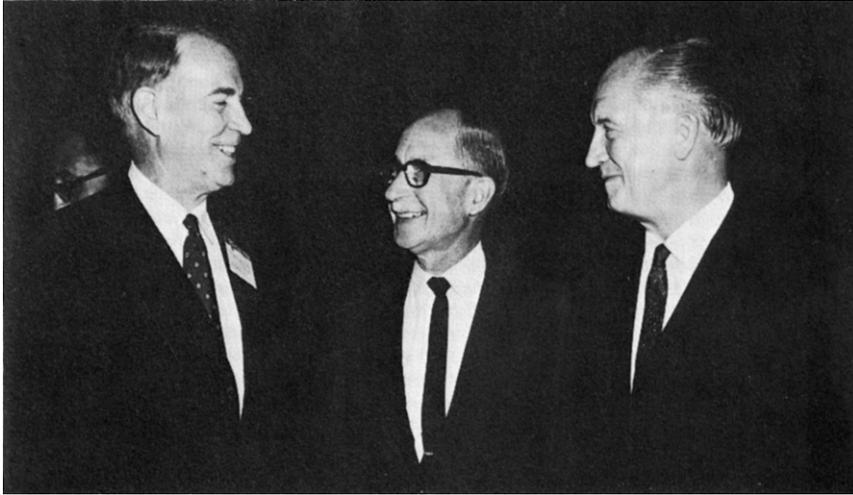


Fig. 2.2. From left to right:

- Frederick E. Gibbs, of Chicago, pioneer of clinical EEG, discoverer of the spike and wave complex, author of a famous Atlas of EEG.
- Herbert H. Jasper, first of Providence, RI, and later of the Montreal Neurological Institute (where he was responsible for the curious association of EEG with skiing). Founder and first editor of the EEG Journal. First president of the International Foundation (1949–1953).
- D.B. Lindsley, pioneer of EEG in America, whose early studies were a cornerstone of pediatric and neonatal EEG. A leading contributor to the study of cerebral electrical correlates of behaviour.

was increased to 10, evidently with the intention of widening the international representation, though this hardly seems to have been necessary when each society had its own designated member. Grey Walter was elected President, Mary Brazier, Treasurer and Henri Gastaut remained as Secretary “to ensure continuity.” Thus the Executive Committee consisted of the 14 society representatives, ten Vice-Presidents and three executive officers with Herbert Jasper in

the anomalous position of Honorary President, 28 members in all, surely too large a number to have any realistic executive function (Fig. 2.2).

The official party for the Congress members was a New England clam-bake at Crane’s Beach. Unfortunately, the evening sky was overcast and the air none too warm; even so, one European lady was censured for the immodesty of her two-piece bathing suit — the bikini had not yet arrived in Massachusetts.