

AN ADDRESS*

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Honoured Guests, Worthy Colleagues, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I feel that when we meet annually to celebrate the birth anniversary of Hahnemann, one of the greatest medical reformers of recent times, we should ponder over the problems facing the votaries of Homœopathy.

I need not take much of your time to convince you that it is a scientific system of medicine, if not the only scientific system. I also need not tell you what the highest amongst the high in the medical circles and the laity in India and other countries have said or written about Homœopathy. I can make it brief by making only one observation. If today anybody tells me that Homœopathy is quackery and sheer nonsense and it is not a science, I shut his mouth by thrusting on him the Homœopathic Enquiry Committee Report of the Government of India. This Committee constituted of an allopath Secretary and two very Senior representatives of the Allopathic profession, a non-medical scientist of repute as the Chairman, besides some homœopaths, toured all over India. It closely examined all the evidence after questioning noted allopaths, important public men, chief ministers and health ministers of different states and homœopaths. *This Government of India report says that Homœopathy is a science.* No further evidence is thus necessary.

If it is a scientific system, a useful means of curing the sick and his sufferings and that too pleasantly and at a nominal cost and our Government has found that much, then what are the reasons for their continued antagonism or indifference? The reason is not far to seek. The Health Ministries at the Centre and the States are guided in their policies by the Health

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Directorates. These are completely staffed by Allopaths. Can we, by any stretch of imagination, expect them to be sympathetic to our case? Even if we suppose that they mean well, but having been trained exclusively in the Allopathic school they are misinformed or at best ill-informed about the other systems of medicine. That ignorance engenders prejudice when it runs contrary to one's belief. As Goethe, the famous philosopher puts it, "If any one advances anything new, which contradicts, perhaps threatens to overturn the creed we have for years repeated and have handed down to others, all passions are raised against him and every effort is made to crush him. People speak of this new view with contempt as if it were not worth the trouble of even so much as an interrogation of a regard. And thus a new truth may wait a long time before it can make its way". The people in the Health Directorate are also human beings and have their own interests to watch. You cannot expect a man to cut the branch on which he is standing.

About their ignorance of Homœopathy the less said the better. As I pointed out at an earlier occasion, it is disheartening to see that the acquaintance with Homœopathy of a previous Director General of Health Services was confined only to its definition in Gould's Medical Dictionary. And mind you this was the senior most official and one who held sway over our destiny as he guided the health ministry. Under the circumstances, what can we expect of them? If not absolutely antagonistic, they can at best be indifferent; certainly not favourable. The result has been that whatever grants are grudgingly extracted from the Ministry or are sanctioned by the Planning Commission are withheld by the Health Directorates on one pretext or the other.

First Five-Year Plan : Out of an expenditure of Rs. 103 crores under Health item a provision of only Rs. 37.5 lacs (not crores) had been made for research into all the non-allopathic systems. Out of this a meagre Rs. 1.5 lacs was all that was received by a Homœopathic Institution.

Second Five-Year Plan : Where the Government has provided Rs. 208 crores for Health schemes, Homœopathy and the indigenous systems of medicines, which are wrongly and un-

necessarily linked together, have been allocated only Rs. 1 crore i.e. less than 0.005% (one crore out of 203 crores) whereas the number of patients treated by these systems is computed at 85%. And where Homœopathy is concerned they get a minor proportion of this meagre allocation. Ladies and Gentlemen, what is more shameworthy is that all this goes on in a democracy—85% of people are being treated by non-allopathic systems and they receive 0.005% Governmental aid and that also is blocked in many ways at every step. Even grants promised or sanctioned before the general elections are withdrawn later. I admit that there is economic stringency, that the country has to fight with its back on the wall, but curiously enough that argument never applies when grants are sanctioned for allopathic institutions.

At a meeting held in May, 1956, between the Planning Commission and representatives of non-allopathic systems of medicine with regard to allocations for them in the Second Plan, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, the then Health Minister, took the plea that Health being a state subject, unless the States asked for aid and were prepared to share the expenses, the Centre can do nothing in the matter. I pleaded with her that in that case the Central Government could certainly start an Institution in Delhi, being centrally administered. Also, when it could establish an All India Institute of Medical Sciences at a colossal expenditure, certainly something could be done for Homœopathy here in Delhi. But all my arguments fell on unreceptive ears and mind.

Rs. 20,000 each has been given to some Homœopathic Institutions for research—rupees twenty thousand only and not rupees twenty lacs. That amount cannot normally cover even the cost of equipment needed for research today.

The only bright feature for us in the Second Plan was the allocation of Rs. 24 lacs for the establishment of a full fledged degree college and hospital at Lucknow. Even that has not been paid and nothing much has come of it.

SOLUTION:

What then is the solution to this sorry state of affairs?

1. Our first and foremost need is for a *Central Council of*

Homœopathy and Separate Directorates at the Centre and in the States to advise on all matters concerning Homœopathy. This has been recommended by all Government Committees in the past, but is not being put into effect :

- (a) It was recommended by the Homœopathic Enquiry Committee of Govt. of India which submitted its report as long ago as 1949.
- (b) The III Health Ministers' Conference held in 1950 considered and approved this report.
- (c) The Planning Commission in their meeting with Homœopathy in 1952 also concurred with this view.
- (d) The Dave Committee has also suggested the same thing.
- (e) In May, 1956, at a meeting of Planning Commission referred to above, as a first step in this direction it was agreed to appoint advisers for Homœopathy and indigenous systems. One adviser has been appointed for Ayurveda but none for Homœopathy. An Advisory Committee for Homœopathy is there, but that is all an eyewash. When they persist in any demands they are told that they are only there to advise the Government. The Government may heed their recommendations or may not.

II. Our Second important need is the *Establishment of fully equipped Institutions and attached up-to-date Hospitals*, where the students can receive thorough theoretical and practical training so that there is no quackery in the times to come.

We are just now in a very curious position wherein we run the risk of gradual extinction. The majority of the States have recognized Homœopathy (the most recent one being Delhi) and have set up boards to register its practitioners and thereby control its practice. This is a commendable step in itself but when no institutions are set up at the same time, it means that there can be no future entrants. That is like slow murder by smothering. The problem was ably expressed by Shri Gulzari Lal Ji Nanda at a conference of Homœopaths, where he said, "While control has its uses, it is obvious that the positive approach to the problem is the creation of educational facilities of the requisite standards on an adequate scale in which the

State has the obligation to give all the help it can". We wholeheartedly agree with him here and legitimately and strongly feel *that control and facilities for training should be stimulative.*

I particularly appeal to the President, Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani Ji, and to those sympathisers of our cause who are in the Government and in the Legislative bodies to help us achieve these desirable aims.

JAI HIND
