1948

Editorally Speaking

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What does the future hold for the profession of veterinary medicine? This is a topic of discussion among students and practitioners alike. Speculation runs high and follows numerous channels for one man's prediction is as plausible as another's.

From the unpretentious private college, the education of veterinarians has expanded until present schools provide students with 6 years of carefully planned training incorporating the best of modern facilities and instruction.

The expansion of veterinary education has required extensive study and research in the field of animal science. Public institutions, commercial biologic houses, and government agencies have provided the knowledge that has enabled the profession to meet the ever-increasing demands placed upon it. It is interesting to note that the expanding store of knowledge has not remained in the confines of our educational institutions but has moved rapidly to the practitioners and displayed itself in the form of improved methods of disease control.

The veterinary profession has had to maintain a certain degree of flexibility in order to meet the changing needs of animal owners. Many observers felt that the passing of the horse era would spell doom to the profession, but the ability to serve the needs of the intensified livestock enterprises of the nation proved this assumption to be wrong. In recent years the demands of pet owners, and a renewed interest in the light horse has broadened and increased the demand for veterinary service.

This leaves the future of veterinary medicine in the hands of those now engaged in practice and those who expect to be engaged in this work in the near future. If the present day workers continue to carry on the traditions of the past and make further strides in improving service to animal owners, veterinary medicine will undoubtedly hold its place in our society regardless of economic trends.

A review of past accomplishments points out the work that must be continued but what further contributions can be made that will improve the status of the profession?

This is a difficult question to answer but there are a number of endeavors that might warrant consideration. In the past, extensive research has been carried out in the interests of the animal industry and at the same time such work has been duplicated by physicians in relation to the problems of the human race. Perhaps an intensive effort to improve cooperation between the two professions, particularly in the field of public health where their spheres overlap somewhat, would be a step in the right direction. An exchange of veterinary students and medical students for a short period or for advanced study might improve the appreciation of these groups for the work of the other and contribute much to mutual advancement.

The recent addition of another year to the preveterinary curriculum should permit the student to obtain a broader insight into the affairs of our society and equip him to be of greater service to his community. If every veterinarian would make an extra effort to devote some time to the functions of his community, it might materially advance the standing of the profession.

Let us view the future of our chosen profession with fore-thought and make a personal effort to maintain its fine record. We are responsible for its success or downfall. C.M.C.