

EDITORIALS

Democracy in the A.S.A.

SINCE 1950, THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ANESTHESIOLOGISTS has been growing rapidly both in membership and services offered to the members. The Executive Office of the Society has expanded both in personnel and space. If the Society is to maintain its present position and to continue its progress, the officers and the governing bodies of the Society must have the assistance of standing and special committees, as well as legal, public relations, accounting, insurance and investment counsel. Furthermore, certain policy surveys will be necessary at appropriate intervals. But no matter how efficiently this executive machinery may function in deciding upon general policies which will further the specialty, it must have the support of alert and active Component Societies, the *grass roots* of the national organization, to assure the effective and democratic progress of our specialty.

Most states have Component Societies. Those that do not are urged to organize one so that their state may be represented in the House of Delegates—the governing body of The American Society which must give final approval of all policies of the Society. Not only should the members of the Society in each state organize a Component Society, but they must also support it by participating actively in regularly scheduled meetings if the principles of democracy are to exist effectively in both the local and the national organizations. Furthermore, the Component Societies should make every effort to select delegates who are willing to attend the meetings of the House of Delegates, as well as those of its Reference Committees. To assure this, within the past year a number of Component Societies have elected to partially defray the expenses of their delegates to allow election of delegates who will represent them effectively, rather than the casual appointment of a member as delegate just because he plans to go to the annual meeting. Likewise, equal thought and consideration must be given when electing a district director.

During 1959, the House of Delegates, the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, the Executive Offices, and the Committees of the Society, all of which are directly responsible to the general membership of the Society, will make every effort to serve your best interest, efficiently and economically. Your district director will be kept well informed of Society business and should circulate this information to the members within the District. If you or your Component Society does not agree with the policies for 1959 or if you have suggestions which you feel will improve the Society, please make it known.

The Constitution and Bylaws of The American Society of Anesthesiologists guarantees the democracy of the Society provided the

membership will exert their rights and privileges. One frequently hears the comment, "The Society is run by a small group of members." Yet those making such comment are many times not willing to participate actively in working out the problems which such an organization must face. In 1959, as well as in the future, only active participation of every member both at a local and national level can assure progress of our specialty in an effective and democratic way.

DANIEL C. MOORE, M.D., PRESIDENT
American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.

On Species Differences

THE never-ending search for better therapeutic agents taxes the ingenuity and the patience of the pharmacologist, who must screen innumerable compounds to find the few potentially useful ones. His preliminary appraisal of these proposed new drugs is based entirely upon the results of experimentation in laboratory animals, results which cannot be transferred indiscriminately to man. For example, observation of the excitatory action of morphine in the cat might lead to an entirely erroneous prediction of the response to morphine in man. The same drug given intravenously in a dose of 1 mg./kg. provides adequate preanesthetic sedation in the dog, but in a 70 kg. man this dose would be disastrous.

Most instances of species differences in drug effects are quantitative rather than qualitative. Hexobarbital (Evipal) produces sleep in laboratory animals, but the duration depends upon the species. Given 100 mg./kg., mice awaken in a few minutes, rabbits sleep nearly an hour, rats longer still, and dogs sleep for many hours. Brodie (J. Pharm. & Pharmacol. 8: 1, 1956) has demonstrated that this difference in sleeping time is related to variations from one species to another in the rate of inactivation of hexobarbital by the enzyme systems present in liver microsomes. The mouse metabolizes hexobarbital rapidly and soon awakens; the dog inactivates the drug very slowly and sleeps for a long time. Which of these findings may one reasonably apply to man? It is apparent that only studies with human subjects can furnish the desired answer.

Man is the ultimate experimental animal. He is also the most complex. Hypotheses concerning mechanism of drug action derived from appropriate studies in animals must be verified (or disproved) in man, applying the same rigorous standards of research to human subjects in the clinic as to other animal species in the laboratory. Indeed, even greater skills may be required to design, conduct and evaluate safe studies in man than in animal investigation. Above all, great care must be exercised to avoid injury in human studies.

In clinical trials of new drugs, quality, not quantity is essential;