

The First Annual Symposium of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine,
Atlantic City, New Jersey, April 12, 1978

Introductory Remarks¹

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The present occasion marks both the 75th year of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine and its first national meeting. In 1903, Dr. Samuel Meltzer, a Russian-born and German-trained physiologist associated with the Rockefeller Institute, assembled a group of congenial colleagues from the New York medical schools and research institutions to found a local science club familiarly known as the Meltzer-Verein (-Union). It held monthly scientific meetings, sometimes at Luchow's restaurant or at the Liederkrantz Club, and established a journal, *The Proceedings of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine*, which became its chief asset.

Those were the days when travel was accomplished predominantly by rail, with a possible horse-drawn vehicle to take the traveler from the railroad station to his hotel or meeting place. Many years were to elapse before the concept of a travel award was to become common. In general, scientists met locally with fellow scientists and only occasionally assembled in national gatherings. The Meltzer-Verein was soon imitated in other cities, and thus there arose some 20-odd regional chapters of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine. These continued to meet for varying periods of years, but as travel money became more generally available and as the airplane replaced the railroad, national meetings replaced those of strictly local societies. As a consequence, when my

predecessor, Dr. Dennis Watson, examined the situation two years ago, he found, despite more than 3000 members, only four of the SEBM chapters that were still holding meetings.

When I assumed the office of President of SEBM, I undertook to explore the desirability of this Society holding national meetings. The membership was polled and the overwhelming majority of members supported the notion that we meet together with the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology. FASEB proved very receptive to this notion, and there shortly came an invitation from the American Physiological Society to be an institutional guest at the April 1978 meeting in Atlantic City. It was further determined that this meeting should take the form of a one-half-day symposium on a topic of combined medical and basic biomedical science interest. The topic selected was "Diseases of Receptor Sites." I asked Dr. Jesse Roth of the National Institute of Arthritis, Metabolism and Digestive Diseases, NIH, to serve as program chairman and to assemble the roster of speakers. He has, I believe, put together an extraordinarily interesting program, which I note is attended both by members of SEBM and by members of the constituent societies of FASEB. This is precisely what I had hoped to see.

At the conclusion of this meeting, my colleagues on the Council of SEBM will come to a determination as to whether the present experiment is a success and how we may pursue the matter further. I, personally, would look forward to a continuing association between SEBM and FASEB over the years ahead.

¹ Presented at the Symposium, "Diseases of Receptor Sites," held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on April 12, 1978.

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