

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT (SIR  
ROBERT PHILIP)

DR MACGREGOR has referred to my views regarding tuberculin and, more particularly, to my advocacy of its regular use by doctors for the purpose of determining the *presence* of tuberculous infection in the child and, as far as possible, the *date* of its contraction. In doing so, he has invited me to say a little more on the subject.

It should be understood, that in claiming for tuberculin a conspicuous place in the routine practice of medicine, I base the claim on the great significance of the information which it may yield.

Having regard to the frequency of tuberculous infection, and the fact of its *probable* contraction sooner or later in childhood, and the continuance of its influence in one or other direction throughout life, I conceive that a sure means for determining the presence of such an infection is one of our most valuable weapons of defence in respect of after-consequences.

It has seemed to me remarkable that a method which has finally won an accredited place in the farming world for the purpose of establishing a tubercle-free herd and of preventing the spread of infection—on economic grounds—should be largely disregarded by the medical world in relation to the life and health of the human subject.

When I press for the use of tuberculin in systematic fashion, it is far from my view to suggest that every child who gives a positive response to the test is to be regarded as a sick child, still less that special treatment should be undertaken. The purpose is simpler and, at the same time, very far-reaching. I am satisfied that the knowledge gained by a positive reaction—the fixing thereby the fact of tuberculisation and approximately the date of its occurrence—is of the utmost importance as affording a very significant means of interpreting subsequent incidents in the life of the child which otherwise might be ignored or left in doubt. Such incidents, if properly interpreted, may prove to be signal posts pointing to possibilities of present and coming trouble. Failure to read the sign-post may lead to grave disaster. I claim that tuberculin, properly used, affords the key to much that otherwise might remain obscure.

## Remarks by the President

It is not suggested by me that every state of delicacy or indefinite illness occurring in the after-life of the child is to be regarded as of tuberculous origin *simply* because of the tuberculin reaction. But I do urge that all such incidents, in proportion to their obscurity and recurrence, are likely to be interpreted more correctly, if the fact of tuberculisaton, or its negation, has been definitely established. We can hardly lay too much stress on the continuing influence of tuberculous infection, for better or for worse, in the life-history of the individual. It was the careful study of the protean effects of *tuberculisaton* in numerous individual cases throughout many years that has led me gradually to develop the principle of *anticipatory detuberculisaton*.