The Second International Congress of Allergy was held in Rio de Janeiro from the 6th to the 13th of November, 1955. The Congress was outstanding in many respects. The headquarters of the Congress were unusual: the Hotel Quitandinha in Petropolis, a modern, splendid palace one hour and a half from Rio, 1000 metres high in a most luxurious setting of picturesque mountains and tropical forests. The president of the Congress, Dr. Fred Wittich, the president-elect, Dr. Sam Feinberg, Prof. F. B. Rabello, Jr., president of the Brazilian Allergy Society, Dr. B. N. Halpern, the secretary-general of the International Association of Allergology, and Dr. Brum Negreiros, the president of the organizing committee, succeeded in establishing a very comprehensive and interesting program.

The great distances, the late date and the high costs of the travel involved, prevented many of the European and American allergists from attending this Congress, but nevertheless, many of the outstanding personalities in the field of allergy were present. There were more than 450 participants from all over the world.

The scientific program was diversified and well-balanced. Many papers dealt with the clinical aspects of allergic diseases, reflecting the interests of the majority of allergists, but the scientific committee had combined these clinical papers with numerous scientific reports, equally important for clinicians and immunologists. A great part of the Congress consisted of Symposia, in which the latest advances in allergology were discussed, with attention to all of the major fields: immunology, chemistry, biochemistry, pharmacology, diagnosis and therapy. During the Symposium on Dermatologic Allergy, Louis Schwartz discussed industrial dermatoses, Storck, bacterial eczema, and Hellerström, atopic dermatitis. In a Symposium on Histamine, Halpern reported on the mechanism of histamine liberation and Rocha e Suva on the role of histamine in allergy, whereas feller spoke on the enzymology of histamine metabolism. The important Symposium on Immunology and Allergy was highlighted by reports by Kabat on immunological techniques applied to allergy, by Lawrence on the transfer of bacterial hypersensitivity of the delayed type and by Freund on homologous sensitizations. During a Symposium on drug allergy, there were discussions by Feinberg on allergy to antibiotics, by Mayer on chemical structure and allergic potentialities of drugs, as well as cross sensitization, and by Esselier on allergy and eosinophilia. The principal topic of a Symposium on Allergy and Hormones was stress and the relationship between allergy and endocrinology. Other Symposia on Asthma, on Therapy of Allergic Diseases, on Leprosy and Tuberculosis, were equally informative and interesting.

It was difficult to decide which of the Symposia was the most revealing. I felt that the Symposium on Leprosy and Tuberculosis was of greatest interest, not only because the entire panel was composed of South American investigators, but because the Symposium was concerned with the very foundation of immunology. During this meeting, J. Rosemberg of São Paulo discussed his contribution on the per-oral imuni-
zation with BCG and the dissociation of immunity and hypersensitivity in TB, and Rabello, from Rio de Janeiro, presented the modern views on immunity in leprosy and tuberculosis. All who participated in these Symposia were left with the conviction that allergy is by no means a minor field of science and of medicine or, as many non-allergists like to declare, a speciality which lives from the confusion in terminology. We all realized the many new important problems and new aspects of allergy, the increased importance of immunology, biochemistry and enzymology in all phases of allergy, and recognized that allergy is rapidly becoming one of the most fascinating fields of research.

Besides the Symposia, numerous independent papers were presented in all fields of allergy dealing with immunology, histamine, drug allergy, asthma, leprosy and TB, therapy, etc. I am unable to discuss details, as most of these papers will be published in various allergy journals. A diversified program of non-scientific activities interspersed the scientific features–movies, excursions, sightseeing through Theresopolis and Rio and the magnificent banquet were welcome interludes. They presented an opportunity to fully appreciate the charm, the friendliness and the congeniality of our South American hosts. Unfortunately, it rained throughout the Congress, and a minor revolution at the end curtailed many of the social activities planned for the closing of the Congress. However, even bad things have their good sides; this rain brought the participants closer together, and we all were able to quietly discuss scientific problems, to understand each other better and to make many new friends.

I want to tell you all this so you realize that this was an excellent Congress, equal to the First International Allergy Congress in Zurich, and all our thanks go to our hosts, who did everything to make this Congress such a success. But I hope that I can also counteract with this report a few, but nevertheless loud and misleading, statements of opinion concerning this Congress, in which attempts have been made to minimize its interest and results. No Congress ever satisfied all of the participants; always some clinicians declare the scientific papers too theoretical, and conversely, many pure scientists, whose lives are spent with test tubes and animals, are not satisfied with clinical discussions; this Congress of Allergy was no exception. Those who are dissatisfied should realize that more than other fields, allergy is equally divided into clinic and laboratory. It is a relatively new speciality, in which clarifications and new theoretical knowledge are as much needed as a precise analysis of clinical observations, and it must be said, for I know I speak in the name of the majority of all participants, that the Rio Congress did all this, in an outstanding way. It was a fine and important gathering, due to the perseverance and interest of the organizing committees in all countries, to the great hospitality of our hosts, and to the open minds of all those who came to the Congress.

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