Situation in the Federal Republic of Germany

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A union of physicians, who feel inclined to the theatre because of their laryngological and phonetic work, and who have set themselves the task of the absolutely necessary furtherance of medical assistance concerning the voices of all artists, in the opera as on the living stage, is intimately to be welcomed from the German point of view. So much the more, as there are surely numerous countries in which the organization and pursuit of these aims are far better realized than in the Federal Republic of Germany. Only very modest commencements of organized medical assistance of the singing or speaking voice have come into existence here, and so I can be very brief concerning my report about the situation in the Federal Republic of Germany. The questions, which Mr. von Leden has pointed out as particularly important in his letter from September, 1970, to the members of 'Comet' have led me to send a questionnaire about the present situation to the management boards of theatres in the large towns of the Federal Republic, which, when the answers are at hand, will present for the first time an authentic and extensive survey of the situation at the most important theatres in the Federal Republic of Germany. I hope that I shall have the opportunity to give a report on this research during the next assembly of 'Comet', when all these answers will have arrived.

Actually it can be stated: there are no physicians in the Federal Republic, who only work for the theatre. The number of physicians with experience in vocal physiopathology or such like, who have had singing lessons themselves, is quite small. There are, however, laryngologists in all larger towns, who take care of singers and actors using their own experience, based on private studies; their names are known among singers and actors, so that they

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voluntarily consult these laryngologists. The theatre management partly knows these laryngologists and follows their advice.

The payment for consultation and medical care by the laryngologist to singers and actors is contributed by the health insurance, to which the singers belong, whereby also socially-interested insurances cover their costs without extraordinary difficulties.

In the theatres themselves, as far as I know, there are no possibilities for laryngological medical care in the way in which Mr. Zilstorff reported of the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. A physician, however, in rotation with others, mostly belonging to the group of assistants in a hospital, is also present during the performance in every theatre, but he has only general duties concerning medical care of the artists or the audience in case of emergency, and normally knows nothing about the voices of the actors.

As in other towns, for example in West Berlin and Munich, there is also an academy of music in Frankfurt for future solo singers, solo players of different musical instruments, for future music teachers, and also for actors. For the students of the academy I regularly lecture on 'Physiology

and hygiene of the human voice and speech' and on 'Impediments of voice and speech', and these lectures are well attended, above all by students who wish to take over music instruction at high schools afterwards. These students, as well as those of a pedagogic faculty with musical-practical function at the University of Frankfurt itself, also come to consult me about their vocal problems, as far as they concern the laryngologist. The co-operation with the teachers of these institutions is very good and productive.