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Editorial
Éditorial

Joint meetings of orthopedic associations

The annual meeting of the Canadian Orthopaedic Association is being held from June 1 to 4, 2002. The meeting will have concluded by the time you read this Editorial, but I hope that the effects of the meeting will last far beyond that week.

This particular meeting of the Canadian Orthopaedic Association was notable for a number of reasons, not the least being that it was the first time we had met in Victoria, BC. The most significant aspect, however, was our guests — this was a joint meeting of the Canadian Orthopaedic Association and the American Orthopaedic Association. These organizations last met together in 1948 in Quebec City. At that time Dr. R.I. Harris from Toronto was the president of both associations. Under these circumstances, I am sure it seemed reasonable to hold a joint meeting. Furthermore, this was a very practical proposition as in those days the membership was small, the meetings were long and leisurely paced, and virtually everyone in the small specialty of orthopedic surgery knew one another.

The most notable aspect of the 1948 meeting, however, was the energy and ideas that flowed from it, resulting in 2 enduring orthopedic educational experiences, which continue to this day.

The first was the concept of having meetings on a regular basis of the orthopedic organizations from Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. These meetings are still held, and the next one is scheduled for Sydney, Australia, in 2004. Canada has had the opportunity of hosting this large joint meeting on several occasions, most recently in

1992 in Toronto. These meetings remain a tremendous opportunity for the exchange of ideas and the advancement of knowledge among these many countries and, equally importantly, renewal of friendship among orthopedic surgeons who work so far away from one another.

The most significant educational opportunity to arise from discussions at the 1948 meeting, however, was the concept of the ABC Traveling Fellowship. Beginning in 1948 as an exchange of orthopedic surgeons between North America and Great Britain this became established as a regular exchange with surgeons from either side of the Atlantic travelling on alternate years either to North America or Great Britain. More recently this has been expanded to include surgeons from South Africa, Australia and New Zealand who travel with the British contingent. The North American surgeons now visit both Great Britain and either South Africa or Australia and New Zealand on the years that they travel.

This exchange fellowship has become the model for countless others in many branches of medicine and surgery. The concept that young academic physicians can visit their contemporaries and meet the leaders of their respective disciplines in different countries and actually watch them work has inestimable academic and social value.

Fifty-four years after the first combined meeting of the Canadian Orthopaedic Association and the American Orthopaedic Association we have had our second combined meeting. Who knows what beneficial, long-lasting concepts born at this meeting will be implemented for the future overall good of orthopedic surgery.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Waddell".

James P. Waddell, MD
Coeditor