ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE—SECTION OF OTOLOGY

President: RONALD MACBETH, D.M., F.R.C.S.

March 4th, 1960

Discussion on the Measurement of Deafness

THE opening papers by Dr. Gunnar Lidén and Mr. Kenneth McLay will be found on pp. 556 and 566.

Discussion of the paper: "The Assessment of Disability Caused by Being Hard of Hearing"

GAVIN LIVINGSTONE

Tuning forks still have an important rôle in diagnostic otology and are not at present outdated.

The measurement of potential hearing gain or cochlear reserve is required when middle-ear surgery is contemplated, and there should always be a good air bone gap in pure tone audiograms as well as a true negative Rinne.

There is great need for an objective hearing test; perhaps in the future psychogalvanic testing or electroencephalograms may prove reliable, but at present pure tone and speech audiometry form the basis of the subjective testing.

In the planning of new Ear, Nose and Throat Departments, adequate space and equipment must be made available for audiology, and a centralized master audiometer with frequencies relayed to each individual examination room may be one way of solving the problem of the increase in personnel required to undertake speech and pure tone audiometry which will accrue when medico-legal aspects of Deafness have to be solved.

Dr. Gunnar Lidén in reply thanked Mr. Livingstone for his kind words and for mild criticism of his paper. Originally he intended to speak of the measurement of deafness. However this is a very vast topic so he decided to restrict himself to the assessment of disability. This brings into the picture cases of hearing loss caused by occupational damage and leaves out the conductive losses. Speaking generally the voice test, pure tone and speech audiometry are most important for the assessment of disability.

He certainly agreed with Mr. McGuckin that the speed with which hearing loss develops is of great importance and the disability has to be re-estimated after some years have elapsed.

He agreed with Mr. Young that the question of psychogenic overlay is very important in assessment of hearing disability. According to his experience nearly all cases who are referred for assessment of disability have a psychogenic overlay.

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