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The Rutherford T. Johnstone Lectures

WITH GOOD WILL and with good reason, the Western Industrial Medical Association has created an Annual Memorial Lecture honoring Rutherford Thompson Johnstone, M.D., who died April 26, 1967. The first of these lectures was presented before the Western Association at its last Annual Meeting and now is presented as the lead article of this issue. It was a happy choice that made Robert A. Kehoe, M.D., the first of the Johnstone lecturers. The speaker and the honored one were peers in age, peers in professional distinction, and peers in devotion to occupational health. Dr. Johnstone would have taken delight in the aptness of the Kehoe title which is: "The Potential Contribution of Industry to the Health of the Nation."

These words are not written for the peers of Rutherford T. Johnstone. All of them know much about him and admire all that much. Even within a lifetime much is changed. R.T.J.'s late peers wondered why he was called "Red" by all, includ-

ing his wife. Only the old-timers remember that carrot thatch that inevitably marked him as "Red." To his late peers he was only "grizzly" as to scalp cover. In part, this is written to prevent Red being labelled as one of the early communists.

This writing is neither an obituary nor a curriculum vitae, but a little of each must appear. Yes indeed, Red Johnstone was the recipient of IMA's Knudsen Award in 1956. Yes indeed, he was the perennial representative of the AMA Section of Preventive Medicine to the AMA House of Delegates. Yes indeed again, he was a member of the AMA Council on Occupational Health from 1947 for as many years as he was eligible. Yes indeed once more, he was an editorial board member of the specialty journals in his medical field. The rest of the abundant vital statistics, future Rutherford T. Johnstone lecturers must unearth for themselves, but that will present no difficulty.

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This writing is addressed to the 50th Rutherford T. Johnstone lecturer who will be struggling to find reasons why an ancient redhead deserved to have a distinguished lectureship named after him. This is going to save that future lecturer who is now running around in diapers a lot of work. Hopes are high that he be a mite grateful.

Two sound reasons are now recorded justifying the Rutherford T. Johnstone Lectures. The first of these, but not certainly the prime one, is that Dr. Johnstone was a prolific and reliable author. He saw and then he wrote. No industrial physician in this country has achieved lasting standing in the absence of the written word. No longer is learning handed down by word of mouth. This is not the place to record the lengthy list of Dr. Johnstone's publications. Mention of the major book publication will suffice. In 1948 he wrote *Occupational Medicine and Industrial Hygiene*, The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis. In 1960, with Seward Miller as co-author, a new book appeared: *Occupational Diseases and Industrial Medicine*, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia & London. Those books have become standard in the formal and informal education of all industrial physicians. Without exception, those books have influenced every physician engaged in specialty training in occupational health. That in itself is sufficient to beckon fame.

The second warrant for the Rutherford T. Johnstone Lectures is the fact that Dr. Johnstone was first, last and always the clinician. Europe long has been singularly blessed with outstanding clinicians in industrial toxicology. The United States has been singularly barren in this domain. It is true that there have been excellent clinicians in specialized fields in the United States. Roy Gardner was a remarkable clinician in the area of occupational chest diseases. Louis Schwartz was equally remarkable in industrial dermatoses. But Roy Gardner would have been lost in the dermatology clinic, and Louis Schwartz would have floundered in the chest clinic. Red Johnstone, as the rare exception, was the universal clinician in occupational diseases and occupational toxicology. Although his books were general in coverage, his own work was well limited to clinical pursuits.

In a measure, this came about accidentally. For years prior to his migration to California, he was an eminent internist in Pittsburgh; but in taking up duties at Golden State Hospital in California, he was overwhelmed with at least a small mountain of occupational disease cases. He did not

know occupational diseases. There was no one in his hospital in a position to guide him, and at the time there were no training centers in occupational health. Red Johnstone trained himself in occupational disease lore.

Rutherford T. Johnstone was professionally lonely. In his early days, Chicago was two days away and New York was three days away. Perforce, he had to meet his own uncertainties and solve his own difficulties. That became the basis for his solid achievements.

In this country, many a potentially great clinician in occupational health has been sterilized by administrative duties. This is not to decry the values and virtues of administrative performance, but the greater the load of administrative duties, the more rapid the disappearance of clinical pursuits. The administrative desk is the graveyard for most of this country's potentially active industrial health clinicians. Rutherford Johnstone never was a corporate medical director, and only to a limited extent ever responsible for routine activities in any industrial plant. Unswervingly, he maintained his clinical activities, and increasingly they became singular in their significance.

All this may be sufficient for the 50th Rutherford T. Johnstone lecture author. Still, this author, in behalf of his audience, may want to know about the appearance of his historic figure. That is taken care of by the accompanying photograph, hope being high that the ravages of sulfur dioxide on the contents of libraries will not be too destructive. Then again, this lecturer in behalf of his audience may want to know at least some few things as to what manner of man the hero of his piece might have been. Little may be supplied here but that little must include the postscripts that Rutherford T. Johnstone, within a single hour, might have been as gentle as a fluffy kitten and as ferocious as a grizzly bear. In time, the grizzly bear was seldom seen. Yet he remained the professional iconoclast; he worshiped no sacred cows; he hated tradition that existed merely for tradition's sake. Most of all, this long professionally isolated clinical toxicologist craved friendships among his own kind. He fought for personal acceptance along with professional preferment. He won both through brains and charm. He was everybody's "Red."

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