

Editorial

The International Congress of Psychotherapy

The Sixth International Congress of Psychotherapy will be taking place in London in the last week of August, under the Patronage of the Queen, and with the Ministers of Labour, of Health, of Education, and of Pensions and National Insurance among the Vice-Patrons. The President of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, which is sponsoring the Congress, will be its President. The auguries are indeed propitious, and it is expected that this will be the largest Congress on this subject which has yet been held. Our country will be welcoming many hundreds of friends and colleagues from abroad; and the organizers have every reason to hope that it will be an exciting and adventurous occasion.

At the time of going to press none of the details of the programme have been settled. In broad outlines, however, on the four days Tuesday, 25 August, to Friday, 28 August, the morning sessions will be plenary ones; while in the afternoons there will be concurrent sessions of smaller groups for special problems, and also presentations of the Film Festival. The topics chosen for discussion by the plenary sessions are: the psychotherapy of infancy, childhood and adolescence; psychology and psychotherapy related to the individual adult; recent advances in the understanding of small groups, their disorders and treatment; and finally the same approach to large groups. The attempt to

review the work of the last twenty-five years over this wide field is ambitious, and will no doubt prove stimulating. The programme has been devised in the belief that one of the most important advances has been the development of psychodynamic principles beyond the treatment of the individual adult in the consulting room into a much wider world—the family in the first place, and then on to the “sociodynamics” of hospitals, penal institutions, communities, industry.

From this preliminary and provisional view it seems that in the main the speakers and discussants will be considering subjects for psychotherapy rather than psychotherapeutic methods, results and limitations. Nevertheless afternoon meetings are to be devoted to the psychological aspects of drug therapy, learning theory, and research methodology. Psychotherapists tend to be enthusiasts, and it will not be easy for the organizers to find, among the many who will be eager to proclaim the virtues of their own methods, the necessary cynics and sceptics concerned to debunk the results of others. However, there are vast divisions of opinion among the psychiatrists whose first love is psychotherapy; and it is to be hoped that in the scientific arena to be opened here in August it will not all be amity and peace, but that there will also be from time to time some mighty tussles.