

Dr. Rankin Speaks Frankly

The election of Dr. Fred W. Rankin as the head of the American College of Surgeons is a high honor to a distinguished surgeon who through choice selected Lexington as the city in which he has practiced this highly skilled profession. Only three times in history has one man been head of the College of Surgeons, president of the American Medical Association and president of the American Surgical Association. The other two are Dr. William J. Mayo and Dr. Charles H. Mayo, father-in-law and brother-in-law of Dr. Rankin.

It is not surprising that in accepting the presidency at the meeting of the College of Surgeons, Dr. Rankin immediately cut deeply into the problems that are now faced by the branch of the medical profession to which he has devoted his life.

Dr. Rankin, in speaking at his installation, referred to ghost surgery, to fee splitting, to exorbitant fees and other subjects which in recent years have attracted unusual comment.

News stories, magazine articles and other comments on these subjects have created much attention and widespread discussion in recent months among those who are deeply affected by such practices but who are not in a position to know accurately about them.

Fortunately it appears that the threat of socialized medicine against which these great societies once bent their energies has passed and the opportunity is offered for critical examination by the surgeons who are fully qualified to speak of the practices within their own profession.

On the whole there has never been a time when the medical profession as a whole and the branch of surgery stood higher in public esteem or merited and enjoyed greater confidence. This, we are sure, will grow, due to the continued services of the profession to those who receive their services and treatment. Dr. Rankin's voice will be a powerful one for the rigid adherence to the practices he extols, for eliminating the abuses he deplores and for bringing public confidence to even higher levels.