IN MEMORIAM

IAN WILLIAM DAVIDSON
1909–1964

Canadian orthopaedic surgery suffered a severe loss in the death of Ian Davidson from cardiac disease on June 14, 1964. He graduated from the University of Toronto, gaining his B.A. in 1931 and his M.D. in 1934, and after internship in the Toronto Western Hospital went to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary in 1936. He obtained his Edinburgh Fellowship and then spent one year at the East Suffolk and Ipswich Hospital where he was much influenced by Edward Bell Jones.

In 1938 he returned to Canada and practised in Parry Sound. At the outbreak of war, with firm sense of duty, he gave up his newly established practice, joined the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps, and had a distinguished military career, first with the No. 2 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station—a famous unit in the R.C.A.M.C. recruited by the University of Toronto in November 1914. Later he commanded in succession No. 3 Canadian Medical Centre, No. 1 Canadian Medical Centre and No. 1 Canadian Field Surgical Unit, completing his military service as second in command of surgery in No. 15 Canadian General Hospital which was another unit intimately associated with the University of Toronto.

After the war he became chief of the orthopaedic division of the Sudbury Clinic and for fifteen years pioneered orthopaedic surgery in Sudbury, and assumed a steadily increasing
role in the leadership of surgery in this community. He became Chief of Staff of the Sudbury Memorial Hospital, chief of the surgical department of the Sudbury General Hospital from 1953 to 1959, chief of the department of surgery of St Joseph’s Hospital, and orthopaedic consultant and chief of staff of the Sudbury and Algoma Sanatorium. These appointments were tributes to his faculty for leadership, one of his outstanding qualities. He had the personality and the ability to unite diverse personalities into a friendly, harmonious group thus averting the stresses and dissensions which too often inhibit progress.

His orthopaedic work led him into the field of rehabilitation and through this interest he became a member of the Advisory Board of the Ontario Society for Crippled Children, and also a member of the Advisory Board of the Rehabilitation Foundation.

He interested himself in the affairs of the Ontario Medical Association, and after five years as member of its Council served from 1961 to 1964 as Chairman of Council, the highest administrative position in the Association. This was at the critical time when the prospect of a National Health Service was looming ahead and when policy planning for the Ontario Medical Association’s programme for voluntary health insurance (Physicians’ Services Incorporated) was demanding much attention.

In 1960 he retired from active practice to become the Administrator and Medical Director of the Ontario Crippled Children’s Centre. This project of the Ontario Society for Crippled Children was then in the planning stage. He supervised its construction and in 1962 when the buildings were completed, he successfully launched its activities and established it as an essential unit for all aspects of rehabilitation of crippled children in Ontario.

Ian Davidson served the Canadian Orthopaedic Association long and faithfully. He was Secretary-Treasurer for eight years. The Association owes much of its present success and security to the leadership and business acumen he gave us during this period. He was elected President for 1963. We shall sadly miss his wise counsel and warm friendship.

In his short life of fifty-five years, he accomplished much. He established orthopaedic surgery on a sound basis in the Sudbury mining area. He developed a large practice and set a high standard for the quality of his work. He had a wide consulting practice. He wrote several sound papers dealing chiefly with problems in trauma. He might well have been content to limit his energies to the practice of orthopaedic surgery. This alone would have been a good record. But it would not have satisfied his ideal. He had a sense of duty and of service which made him feel responsibility for the proper functioning of the institutions in which he worked and the world of organised medicine in which he lived. It was this that led him to assume the time-consuming administrative responsibilities in Sudbury hospitals and in the Ontario Medical Association. They must often have been tedious and frustrating. But he had the satisfaction of realizing that his conscientious and painstaking work accomplished benefit for the organisation to which he gave his time and energy so freely.

His life was not wholly concerned with medicine. There was a spiritual side to it also. He was a devoted Presbyterian and an elder of the Kirk in Knox Church, Sudbury. His pastor there, the Reverend James S. Ross, who had known him since they were students together in Knox College, Toronto, paid a moving tribute to him at the funeral service: “It was an inspiration to see a man of character, professional skill and ability, busily engaged in his chosen life work, who could find time to serve God through his Church. Life for him had a purpose and was filled with meaning.”

We honour him for his personality and his accomplishments. We shall remember him as a warm friend who, with his wife Berenice, entertained his colleagues on many happy occasions. He leaves a lasting impression upon the Canadian Orthopaedic Association and upon orthopaedic surgery in Canada, which will be a continuing monument in his honour.

R. I. H.