IN MEMORIAM

RICHARD HENRY DAWSON
1915–1967

Orthopaedic surgery in New Zealand has suffered a severe loss with the death in office of the president of the New Zealand Orthopaedic Association, Dick Dawson. On May 13, at the age of fifty-one, he died suddenly from a coronary occlusion whilst duck shooting.

Born in India, the son of a medical family, he developed at an early age a fondness for "tinkering" and a wide variety of interests. He was educated at Christ's College and graduated from the University of Otago Medical School in 1939. He spent a year as a house surgeon at New Plymouth Hospital and then volunteered for service overseas with the New Zealand Medical Corps. He remained with the Eighth Army throughout the North African and Italian campaigns. He was mentioned in dispatches for remaining with the wounded at Benghazi when it was occupied by the Italians, and later he escaped.

At the end of the war he returned to New Zealand temporarily. He then proceeded overseas and obtained his F.R.C.S. at Edinburgh in 1947, and later the degree of M.Ch.(Orth.) at Liverpool, where he was Resident Surgical Officer at the Alder Hey Children's Hospital. He returned to New Zealand in 1949 and initiated the orthopaedic service in the North Auckland area, based at Whangarei. He established peripheral clinics in widely scattered areas which involved long hours and travelling hundreds of miles weekly, but the tedium of this was lightened by the occasional shot that he could obtain at unwary game birds near the roadside. In 1952 he moved to Palmerston North in the lower part of the North Island and rapidly developed the orthopaedic services in that area. His opinion was widely sought by patients and colleagues. He was an excellent and practical surgeon and had developed many instruments, many of which he had made himself.

He was a Foundation Fellow of the New Zealand Orthopaedic Association and the first holder of the Gillies Golf Cup. He was a regular attender at the New Zealand Orthopaedic Association meetings and as a speaker on scientific and social occasions was well known in New Zealand and overseas.

One of his particular orthopaedic interests was the treatment of inequalities of leg length. While in Liverpool he had developed a simple device for measuring the length of legs radiologically, and he was greatly delighted to find the apparatus still in use when he returned there in 1957. He had also collected a large series of cases of adolescent coxa vara and had developed an angled plate for fixation in biplane osteotomies. At the time of his death he was experimenting with a compression device for intertrochanteric osteotomy. He was particularly fond of outdoor activities and many overseas visitors will remember his generous hospitality on fishing and shooting trips.
Orthopaedic surgeons in many parts of the world will miss Dick Dawson, and in particular those in New Zealand where he had attained such distinction at an early age. Our sympathy is extended to his wife José and their three daughters. A Dawson Memorial Trust Fund has been set up by the New Zealand Orthopaedic Association to assist the training of young orthopaedic surgeons, and this will be a fitting and lasting tribute.

P. C. G.

TOM PRICE
1914-1967

Tom Price died recently at his home in Heswall after a long illness. He was born in 1914 with congenital dislocation of both hips, and all his life he was handicapped by this disability. This, however, did not prevent him qualifying in medicine in 1939 and entering the R.A.M.C. in 1941, to serve in India and Pakistan. After demobilisation he took the degree of M.Ch.(Orth.) Liverpool, and in 1948 was appointed orthopaedic surgeon to the Bath and Wessex Orthopaedic Hospital.

For the next ten years he led a very busy and successful clinical life, being specially interested in the orthopaedic care of children, and was consultant surgeon to many school clinics in the Somerset and Wiltshire areas. In 1948 he developed malignant hypertension and was plagued by ill health which ultimately necessitated his reducing his clinical load and finally retiring in March 1964. During this period his great courage enabled him to continue with the work to which he was devoted, and the fact that he was constantly under medical care and in physical difficulties never prevented him from giving the best possible attention to his patients.

In spite of a double physical handicap he retained his interest and enthusiasm for clinical orthopaedics and even after his retirement he continued to attend ward rounds at the Royal Liverpool Children’s Hospital, Heswall.

If ever there was an example of the human spirit overcoming grave physical handicaps it was Tom Price, and, although he may not have made many contributions to the literature, his keen analytic mind and his human sympathy ensured that his patients always received excellent care. Both his patients and his colleagues found inspiration in the high standards he maintained in all aspects of his life.

R. R.