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CANCER AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH¹

By Dr. THOMAS PARRAN, Jr.

SURGEON GENERAL, UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

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WITH parts or all of every continent at war, it is difficult even for neutrals to retain that dispassionate concentration upon *science* which is necessary for a fruitful discussion of the problems confronting this Third International Cancer Congress.

Devoting our lives, as we are, to the saving, the conservation of human life, it is inescapable that our first reaction to mass killing is one of frustration, of futility. How puny are our efforts to save compared with the effect of war. Four years of the World War nullified, wiped out, the results of probably forty years of medical progress. The lifetime of a hundred laboratories, a thousand scientists, tens, yes, hundreds of thousands of doctors and nurses gone for naught.

All of you, I am sure, share with me the fervent hope that we and our children will be spared the material,

¹ Address before the Third International Cancer Congress, Atlantic City, N. J., September 13, 1939.

the physical, the mental, and above all the spiritual losses which follow a major conflict at arms.

Whether you thank or blame *science*, in these days no nation ever wins a war or profits by it—whether as a combatant or a neutral. Whatever its duration or costs, however, there is some consolation in the fact that every war is followed by peace.

Instead of becoming amateur strategists—as we are tempted to do—each of us must look forward even now to that peace, and consider in the meantime what we individually, in our chosen sector, can do to neutralize, to make up the losses which war entails.

Not counting other losses, if the material costs of the World War and the armament costs since then could have been spent to satisfy the basic needs of the people for peaceful living, the world to-day would be experiencing a standard of living beyond anything ever dreamed of. To attain a higher standard of national

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