

Twenty-Second Congress

Leiden—1962

J. W. DUYFF, *President*

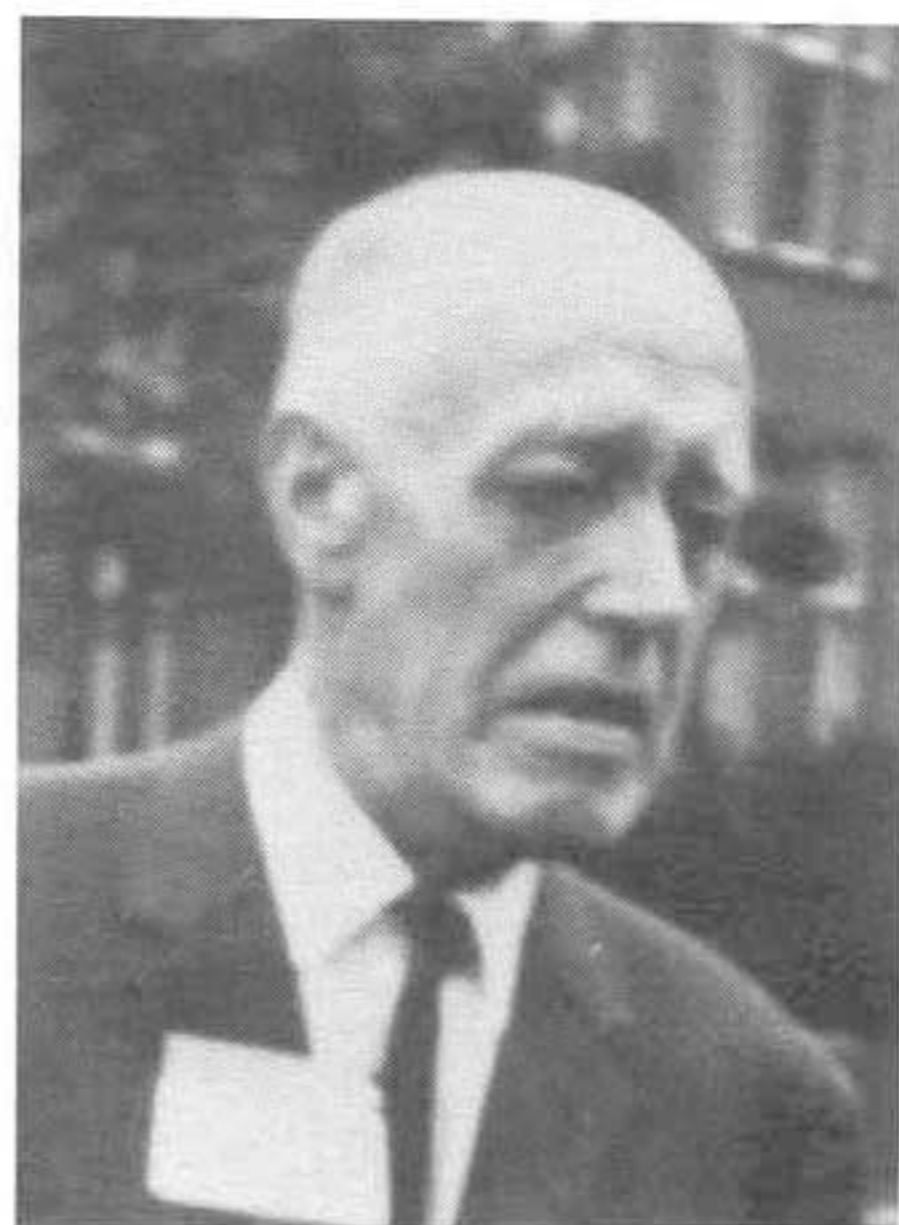


FIG. 1. Professor J. W. Duyff, President of the Congress.

Montreal (1953), Brussels (1956), Buenos Aires (1959), Tokyo (1965), and Munich (1971) are large cities. Leiden (1962) barely counts 100,000 inhabitants. Although the lecture theatres at the University Hospital could easily accommodate the scientific sessions, it was impossible to find hotel accommodations for the 2800 active members and their dependents in Leiden itself, which has no hotels to speak of. The nearby seaside resorts of Scheveningen and Noordwijk, however, could absorb the influx of congress members—but only after the end of the high season. This was the reason why the Leiden Congress could not be held in August. The fact that congress members were lodged 10–15 miles from Leiden necessitated the setting up of a fairly elaborate transportation system, including shuttle services.

Leiden boasts one legitimate theatre and one concert hall. Of course, both had to be under reconstruction at the time the congress was held, so neither the opening session nor the closing session could be held in Leiden itself. In a way, this was a blessing in disguise, for it opened the opportunity of having the inaugural session in the nineteenth century Knights' Hall at The Hague, the scene of the Queen's yearly Speech from the Throne on the occasion of the opening of the new session of Parliament. There, the congress was officially opened by the acting Minister of Science and Education; the rightly famous Netherlands Chamber Choir gave a performance of late sixteenth century music. On the program were, among other numbers, the Netherland's National Anthem, extolling the virtues of William of Orange, the "Father of the Fatherland" and the founder of the University of Leiden, and the hymn "O Leida Gratiiosa," which is sung every year when the University's birthday is celebrated. Afterwards, there was a reception at the prestigious Mauritshuis Museum, a beautiful seventeenth century palace built for Maurice of Nassau, the then Governor of Brazil, and which now houses some of the world's most famous paintings.

Concurrently with the congress, a week-long symposium on the processing of information in the nervous system was held under the chairmanship of Ralph W. Gerard, to whom an honorary degree in medicine was conferred by the University of Leiden. The ceremony took place in St. Peter's Church, the fourteenth century Gothic pile that saw the birth of the University. When, at the end of 1574, the people of Leiden had withstood the year-long

siege by the Spaniards, and when the city had been relieved by the troops of William of Orange, a thanksgiving service was held in this church, and to recompense the people of Leiden for their fortitude, William offered them the choice between perpetual freedom from taxes, or a university within the walls of Leiden. Of course, they were crazy enough to choose the University.

The fact that Leiden is only a small place also made it virtually impossible to organize a congress banquet. This, again, was a blessing in disguise: a banquet for two or three thousand people usually means cold food, bad service, and interminable speeches. Instead, there were 18 section dinners where physiologists of the same persuasion (circulation physiologists, neurophysiologists, etc.) dined together. Notable among these section dinners was the "respiration dinner," which, in reality, was a tribute to Wallace O. Fenn and featured the first performance of the "Respiration Suite" by the Dutch composer Jurriaan Andriessen, dedicated to Dr. Fenn.

The Council of the Union was received in audience by the Queen at Soestdijk summer palace, about 40 miles from Leiden, on the morning of September 14. The closing session of a congress usually is a dismal affair. This was true in the case of the Leiden Congress: despite the fact that a free, alcoholic stirrup cup was offered, less than 500 congress members took the trouble to attend the farewell session at Scheveningen's Kurhaus Hotel. This time again, the congress ended not with a bang, but with a barely audible whimper.

EDITOR'S NOTE

This congress, with its 2399 active members and 800 associate members (not counting 500 cancellations), was described by the Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences, Her Excellency Dr. M. A. M. Klompe, in her opening address, as the largest scientific gathering ever held in the Netherlands. Even so, the number fell a little below the expected 3500. (There were 800 from the USA although 1500 or more had been predicted.) Other talks at the opening session were given by Professor Jonbloed, speaking on behalf of the Netherlands Physiological and Pharmacological Society, and by Professor Duyff, as President of the Congress, who described among other things the colorful history of the University of Leiden.

From all points of view, it was a highly successful meeting and well organized in every minute detail, mostly, it seemed, by President Duyff himself. The Archives of IUPS contain a lengthy *Post-Mortem of a Congress* by Professor Duyff, which describes just how and why the congress was organized and why it was done in that particular way.

As souvenirs of the congress all members were presented with a profusely illustrated pamphlet presented by the National Museum for the History of Science, and entitled, "Some Dutch Contributions to the Development of Physiology," including accounts of the work of Boerhaave, Leeuwenhoek, deGraaf, Donders, Swammerdam, Einthoven, and others. Another souvenir



FIG. 2. Her Majesty Queen of the Netherlands meets with members of the Council of IUPS and others. 1, V. Erspamer (Italy); 2, Lord Adrian (UK); 3, G. Kato (Japan); 4, B. K. Anand (India); 5, J. W. Duyff (President of the Congress); 6, E. A. Asratyan (USSR); 7, B. A. Houssay (Argentina) President of IUPS; 8, Her Majesty the Queen; 9, Sir Lindor Brown (UK); 10, J. Walawski (Poland); 11, H. Schaefer (Germany); 12, F. C. MacIntosh (Canada); 13, D. Bovet (France); 14, W. O. Fenn (USA); 15, C. F. Schmidt (USA); 16, R. W. Gerard (USA).

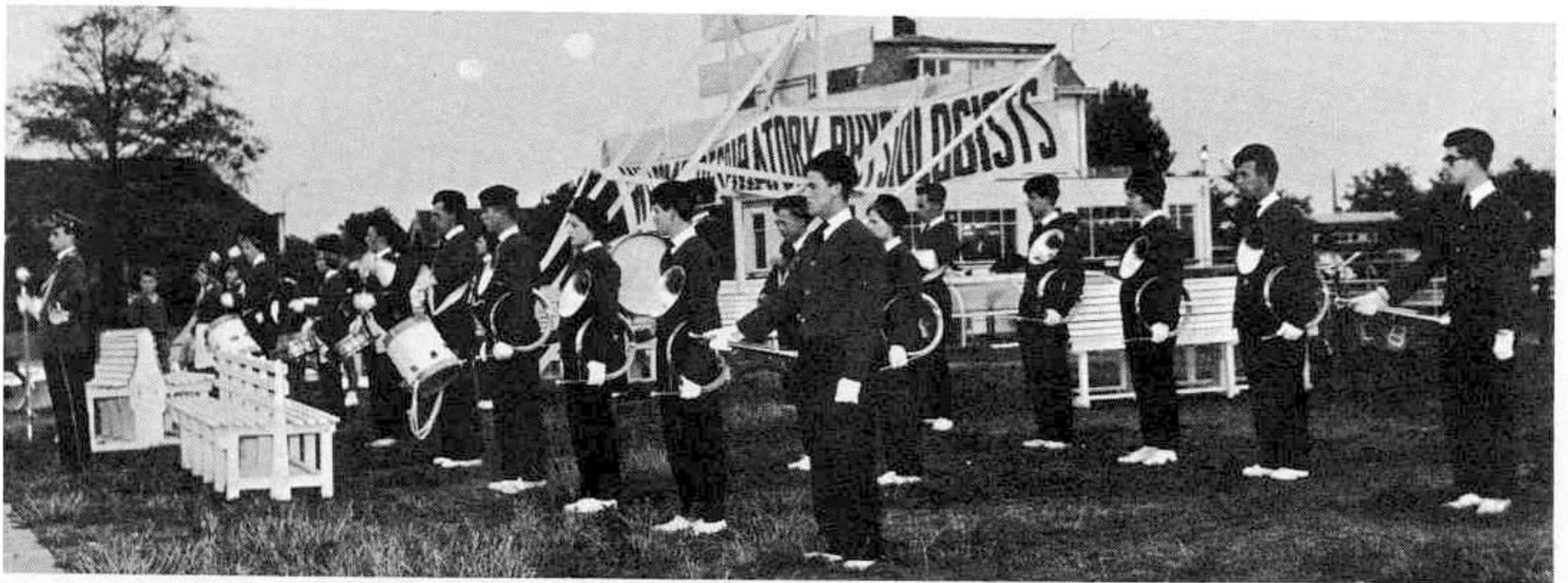


FIG. 3. The band in front of a sign saying "Welcome Respiratory Physiologists." The band played to greet the party when it arrived by two canal boats for the Respiration Dinner.

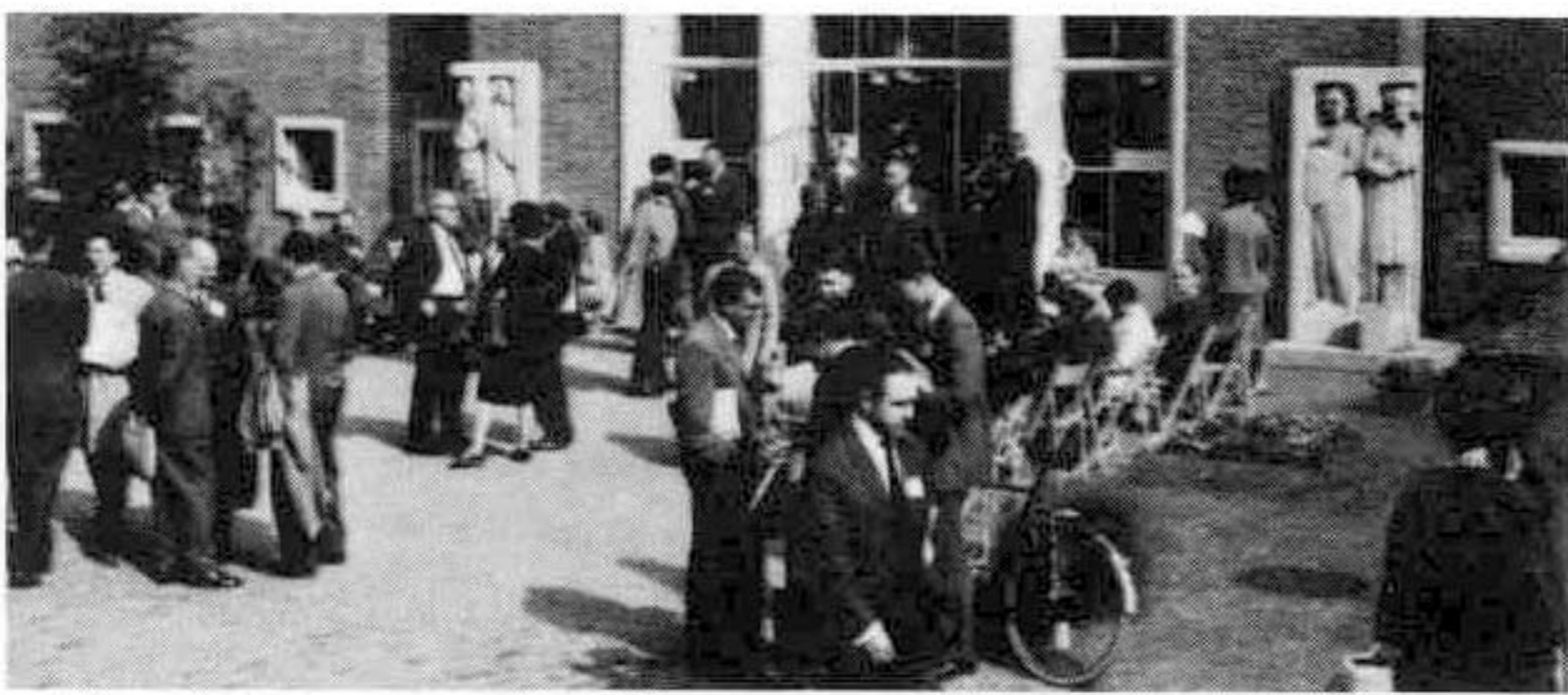


FIG. 4. Congress members around the front door of the Institute of Physiology at Leiden. (Figs. 4, 5, and 6 from A. B. Craig.)



FIG. 5. Statues on either side of the entrance to the Institute of Physiology. Berthold and William Harvey on the left and Claude Bernard and Ivan Pavlov on the right.



FIG. 6. Mobile Post Office adjacent to Congress headquarters.

was a copy of F. C. Donders' *Accommodation and Refraction of the Eye*, translated by W. D. Moore, a valuable 282-page treatise first published in 1864.

Two volumes of lectures and symposium talks and one volume of volunteer abstracts were published and given to all registrants free of charge. The registration fee was kept low, at \$17.50 if paid before February 1 (\$22.50 if paid later), in the interest of the younger physiologists. The plan of arranging dinners for various specialty groups worked out well indeed, and was a very satisfactory substitute for a large banquet.

One novel feature of this congress was the daily publication of a Congress Bulletin. This contained news of the congress, accounts of important addresses, notices of important lectures, and historical accounts of features of special interest in Leiden and its environs.

There were also a number of very interesting excursions for members to choose from; to Amsterdam, the Hague, Rotterdam, Volendam, and other places. The congress was scheduled to include one weekend, giving a free day for such trips. On the evening of September 13, the congress was invited to visit the Frans Hals museum in Haarlem, and on the evening of September 15, there was a choice of a special concert by the Hague Philharmonic Orchestra or a ballet performance.

Members of the congress will long remember the many friendly encounters on the spacious lawns around the Institute of Physiology; with the mobile trailer post office and the large tent for well-served luncheons, the doorway of the Institute bordered by flower beds and attractively decorated with profiles of Harvey, Einthoven, and other famous physiologists, the simultaneous signal lights for all sessions (generally successful but productive of some amusing incidents), the very helpful multilingual student guides everywhere available, the quiet, pleasant country along the banks of the canals, and the weary and somewhat worried face of the very efficient President of the Congress to whom the members were so much indebted for a very well-planned meeting.