

September 23, 1937

[National Foundation for Organite Research]

FDR Speech File

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I have been very much concerned over the epidemics of infantile paralysis which have been prevalent in many cities in different parts of the country. I have had reports from many areas in which this disease is again spreading its destruction. And once again there is brought forcibly to my mind the constantly increasing accumulation of ruined lives --- which must continue unless this disease can be brought under control and its after effects properly treated.

My own personal experience ^{and} the work that we have been doing at the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation for over ten years, lead me to the very definite conclusion that the best results in attempting to eradicate this disease cannot be secured by approaching the problem through any single one of its aspects, whether that be preventive studies in the laboratory, emergency work during epidemics, or after treatment. For over ten years at the Foundation at Warm Springs, Georgia, we have devoted our effort almost entirely to the study of improved treatment of the after effects of the illness. During these years other agencies, which we have from time to time assisted, have devoted their energies to other phases of the fight. I firmly believe that the time has now arrived when the whole attack on this plague should be led and directed, though not controlled, by one national body. And it is for this purpose that a new national foundation for infantile paralysis is being created.

As I have said, the general purpose of the new foundation will be to lead, direct, and unify the fight on every phase of this sickness. It will make every effort to ensure that every responsible research agency in this country is adequately financed to carry on investigations into the cause of infantile paralysis and the methods by which it may be prevented. It will endeavor to eliminate much of the needless after-effect of this disease - wreckage caused by the failure to make early and accurate diagnosis of its presence. We all know that improper care during the acute stage of the disease, and the use of antiquated treatment, or downright neglect of any treatment, are the cause of thousands of crippled, twisted, powerless bodies now. Much can be done along these lines right now. The new foundation will carry on a broad-gauged educational campaign, prepared under expert medical supervision, and this will be placed within the reach of the doctors and the hospitals of the country. The practicing physician is in reality the front line fighter of the sickness, and there is much existing valuable knowledge that should be disseminated to him.

And then there is also the tremendous problem as to what is to be done with those hundreds of thousands already ruined by the after-effects of this affliction. To investigate, to study, to develop every medical possibility of enabling those so afflicted to become economically independent in their local communities will be one of the chief aims of the new foundation.

Those who today are fortunate in being in full possession of their

muscular power naturally do not understand what it means to a human being paralyzed by this disease to have that powerlessness lifted even to a small degree. It means the difference between a human being ~~completely~~ dependent on others, and an individual ^{who can be} ~~wholly independent.~~ The public has little conception of the patience and time and expense necessary to accomplish such results. But the results are ^{as of the} ~~as~~ important to the individual.

The work of the new organization must start immediately. It cannot be delayed. ~~Some~~ of its activities will include ^{Among many others} those of the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation, of which I have been president since its inception. I shall continue as president of that foundation. But in fairness to my official responsibilities, I cannot at this time take a very active part in the much broader work that will be carried out by the new foundation, and I therefore do not feel that I should now hold any official position in it. However, because I am wholeheartedly in this cause, I have enlisted the sincere interest of several representatives and outstanding individuals who are willing to initiate and carry on the work of the new foundation. Its personnel will be announced as soon as it is completed.

Howard W. Blakeslee	Science Editor, Associated Press	New York City
David Dietz	Cleveland Press	Cleveland, O.
William Engle	New York World Telegram	New York City
Victor Henderson	Philadelphia Inquirer	Philadelphia, Pa.
Thomas Henry	Washington Star	Washington, D.C.
Waldemar Kaempffert	New York Times	New York City
Hillier Kriethbaum	United Press	Washington, D.C.
Gebind Behari Lal	Science Editor, Hearst Newspapers	New York City
William L. Laurence	New York Times	New York City
Herbert B. Nichols	Christian Science Monitor	Boston, Mass.
John J. O'Neill	New York Herald Tribune	New York City
Allen Schoenfeld	Ann Arbor Detroit News	Ann Arbor, Mich.
Jan Stafford	Watson Davis Science Service	Washington, D.C.

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