



DR. CHARLES BEST AND LADY BANTING WITH BRONZE BUSTS OF BANTING AND BEST WHICH THEY RECEIVED
Dr. Best and Lady Banting in turn presented the sculpture to the Toronto Academy of Medicine to be displayed

Mark 40th Anniversary Of Insulin Discovery

It was the summer of 1921, Toronto was in the grip of a record heat wave. Leonard Thompson, a 14-year-old boy, his body wasted by diabetes to 65 pounds, lay on his bed in the Toronto General hospital. His father was told the end was near. But Leonard became the first person in the world to get insulin and it saved his life.

Soon after, Harry Diamond, a 46-year-old Toronto lawyer, weighing only 90 pounds, but bloated from a "starvation" diet of thrice-boiled vegetables, waited outside a doctor's office in the hospital and begged to be used as a human guinea pig for any experimental treatment. He had already been turned away from the clinic as a hopeless case. But he was given insulin and lived.

These were two of the dramatic incidents recalled last night as the surviving members of the research team headed by Sir Frederick Banting took part in a meeting in Oster hall, marking the 40th anniversary of the discovery of insulin. Sir Frederick was killed in a plane crash in Newfoundland

in 1941 while on a war mission.

Leonard Thompson lived for another 13 years, dying of bronchial pneumonia. Harry Diamond was restored to health, though for a few weeks when the meagre insulin supply ran out, his fate hung in the balance. He went back to the practice of law and lived another 33 years, dying in 1954 at the age of 79.

"Fred Banting will live in the hearts of successive generations of diabetics," said Dr. C. H. Best, co-discoverer of insulin. "He was the most wonderful man I have ever known and the greatest scientist Canada has ever produced."

"Sure Faith"

"We were young and of a sure faith and knew it could be done and it was done," said Dr. W. R. Campbell, Toronto, a member of the Banting team, who treated the Thompson boy.

"People owe their lives to Sir Frederick Banting," said Dr. J. R. Collip, dean and professor of medical research at University of Western

Ontario, and one of Banting's co-workers.

A fourth surviving member, Dr. A. A. Fletcher, Toronto, who treated Harry Diamond, said Banting had to fight against pessimism and scepticism in his search for the extract of beef pancreas which would lower blood sugar in the body. "I offered him no encouragement myself," Dr. Fletcher admitted.

A tribute to the discoverer was paid by Dr. William Boyd professor emeritus of pathology at University of Toronto.

"The history of medicine like the history of the world is the history of but a few people," he said. "To leave his footprints on the sands of time, a man must wear his workman's shoes. There must have been many nights when Banting and Best and Collip slept in those shoes."

The records of Marjorie, dog No. 33, the first diabetic animal kept alive for a long period by insulin, were on display at the meeting. "Her record has been quoted all over the world to defend the use of animals in medical research," said Dr. Best.

Dr. Collip recalled that he came back to the U. of T. in 1921 from Edmonton to take a post in one department, and insisted that the head of another department, the late J. J. R. Macleod, be his research chief.

"Gall of Horse"

"I had the gall of a canal horse to ask this," Dr. Collip said. "If any young man came to me with that kind of proposition now I'd tell him to go jump in the lake."

He said Prof. Macleod was an important figure in the

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Celebrate Insulin's Find

(Continued from Page 23) original research and did not allow his name to be used on the published reports "in order to focus attention on the younger members."

Dr. Collip added humor to the mood of nostalgia in Oser's talk by recalling how, in earlier research on pancreatic glands, he had to make a hurried trip from Edmonton to Vancouver because the dogfish were running. He had to have a large quantity of alcohol to preserve the pancreas, and since it was the weekend, and the express was closed, was forced to take seven gallons along on the train, fire in a large jug he put in an empty drawing

room, and two one-gallon cans in his suitcase.

Unfortunately, he forgot to allow some air space in one of the cans in his suitcase, parked under his lower berth, and it exploded. Soon the sleeping car was full of alcohol fumes and the Pullman carpet was soaked. In the morning all the passengers staggered to the smoker complaining of hangovers.

Dr. Collip's voice almost broke as he finished his talk with a simple statement of thanks for having had the privilege of working on insulin. His contribution was in its purification.

"Live OK Fat"

Dr. Campbell recalled that

in 1921, full professors were paid \$2,500 a year and as a junior staffer he received \$62.50 a month. "We were expected to liberate in summer and live off our fat," he said.

Before lunch came along, there wasn't one kind of fat being, he said, those who died quickly and those who "stuck around for a while."

"You couldn't do anything for the first, and very little for the second."

Dr. Campbell predicted that an improved form of insulin, with both long-term and short-term benefits, would be produced in the future.

In that fatal summer and

fall of 1921, the research team became "greedy and desperate" for insulin to keep its spark of life flickering in the critical cases of diabetes in hospital. "Dr. Collip worked far into the night, an older man couldn't have done it," Dr. Campbell said.

Dr. Boyd commented that each surviving researcher saw the work through his own eyes, and each in a very different way from the others.

Dr. J. Wallace Graham, president of the academy, presented a bust of her late husband by Canadian sculptress

Frances Loring to Lady Henrietta Bunting. A bust of Dr. Best, by Mrs. Ruth Rockman, of New York, an amateur sculptress and wife of

diabetes specialist, was presented to Dr. Best. Both Lady Bunting and Dr. Best, in turn, donated them to the academy for permanent display.