2. Erythema nodosum leprosum (including the erythema multiforme variety): This is the only kind of reaction discussed by Hayashi or mentioned specifically by Lara, both of whom find the balance unfavorable. Chaussinand, too, regards it as something to be avoided. Davison and Kooij, commenting that it occurs late in the disease, hold it to be harmful. Floch regards it as variable in its effects; and Contreras, speaking generally, says that the erythema nodosum type of reaction, in whatever disease it occurs, more often enhances the resistance than causes harm. It does not appear that either of these authorities would deliberately induce the condition as a therapeutic measure.

3. The "reversal reaction": Mentioned only by two contributors. Hayashi mentioned it as one of two forms of reaction which occur in lepromatous leprosy but did not discuss it. Floch regards it as beneficial. (It must be noted, however, that the favorable basic change which is represented outwardly by the appearance of this more-or-less tuberculoid reaction must have occurred in the patient beforehand, to cause the peculiar reaction, rather than afterward as a result of it.) Of what consists the "involution" condition, the "conversion of clinical form," of which Eduardo Rodrigues speaks is uncertain—at least to this reviewer, unless it is this reversal reaction. It is to be seen from this sampling, therefore, that whereas no contributor believes that "frequent, severe and prolonged" reactions in lepromatous leprosy are beneficial, there are considerable variations of opinion as regards the effects of certain forms or degrees of reactions. There is a division as regards erythema nodosum leprosum, with Contreras regarding it as beneficial more often than not, and Floch finding it sometimes so, but with Lara, Hayashi, Chaussinand, and Davison and Kooij of contrary opinion—the last-named having recently published on the subject. Conspicuous is the lone stand of Davison and Kooij in favor of "acute lepromatous infiltration," which others believe aggravates the patient's condition. One last comment is ventured. It would seem that by this time, the middle of the twentieth century, leprologists should have been able to come to a general agreement regarding the forms of reactions that occur in lepromatous leprosy, if not about the names to apply to them. One may wonder if this matter of reactions in leprosy as a whole may not perhaps be worthy of the attention of the next international congress.

—H. W. W.

REATIONS AT NEW DELHI

The last paragraph of the preceding note, with its suggestion that the subject of lepra reaction—at least the nomenclature of the various forms

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of reactions—might be a proper subject for special consideration at the New Delhi Congress, has been submitted to several of our correspondents and contributors for comment. The first answer received, from Dr. C. B. Lara whose office is but a few steps from ours, reads as follows:

The variety of ideas concerning benefits or absence of benefits from reactions in lepromatous leprosy is not surprising. Personally, I think that the situation arises mainly from the very imperfect state of knowledge regarding not only their causation and mechanism but even observational details as regards the associated clinical, immunologic and histologic features.

It seems to me, therefore, that it should be profitable and productive of fruitful discussion to suggest to interested workers that they might review and reappraise their experiences, preferably to reverify their ideas or put them to test; consider especially the influence of the possible simultaneous existence of different histologic features in certain cases undergoing reactional episodes; in short, to include in such studies a more adequate consideration not only of the clinical and bacteriologic aspects but also of the histologic and immunologic characteristics of the cases.

At the time of writing it is so late that no special plans can be made for the consideration at New Delhi of the subject of reactions in leprosy, nomenclature or nature. However, it can be said with some degree of confidence that the Congress authorities will give thought to how any proffered papers on the subject can best be utilized to initiate a serious discussion of the matter. It may well be that no decisions could be arrived at there, but at least emphasis would be given to the subject for thorough consideration at the next congress, to be held in 1963.

—H. W. W.

CLARITY VERSUS SPEED

The chief value of a congress such as the one to be held in New Delhi next November lies in an interchange of ideas, whether in private conversations, in group discussions, or in the reading and debating of papers.

Frequent complaints have followed previous congresses organized under the auspices of the International Leprosy Association, particularly those held in Havana and Madrid, that many of the papers were read so rapidly and indistinctly that they could not be followed by the audience. Even the expert interpreters who had been engaged for simultaneous translation, were at times compelled to give up in despair. Warnings from chairmen and secretaries had little effect on these would-be speed-record breakers. To quote Emerson: "In skating over thin ice, our safety is in our speed"; and perhaps the thinness of the material in some papers accounted for the speed with which they were delivered.

But even carefully prepared papers, detailing the results of much hard original work, may fail to get over to the audience if the delivery is faulty. The founder of the Christian religion rebuked those who thought their prayers would be heard "for their much speaking." The same rebuke may be applied to many authors who value their papers by the number of words they crowd within the allotted time. In many instances all that