

REVIEWS

Prophylaxie et Thérapeutique de la Lèpre. By R. CHAUSSINAND. Paris: G. Doin et Cie, 1958, 98 pp.

After outlining briefly the different forms of the disease and their evolution, the author approaches in a very liberal spirit the question of prophylaxis. Practice in this matter, apart from certain general principles, varies according to the different regions and countries.

In the foreground is the protection of the children and adolescents, and here the author discusses the importance, practice, and results to be expected from BCG vaccination. Then he deals with the means for the campaign against leprosy, namely, dispensaries, sanatoria, leprosy villeges, hospitals, and mobile units.

The most important chapter is that on therapy. The different medications are discussed in detail, the main place being given the sulfones, which constitute the most effective and proved treatment. The drug of choice is the parent sulfone, given in small and gradually increasing doses.

There follows a discussion of the treatment of the different complications of leprosy, and the treatment of its sequelae. The latter, essentially surgical, aims at the social rehabilitation of the cured patients.

An annex describes the methods of the bacteriologic examination; also the lepromin test, with its technique, the reading of the results, and especially their interpretation.

The book ends with a list of 129 bibliographic references and an alphabetic index which makes consultation easy. This book, clear and concise, is of much practical value and will be useful to many physicians at home as well as overseas.—N. BOURCART

First Report on the World Health Situation, 1954-1956. WHO Official Records, No. 94. Geneva, 1959, 392 pp., \$3.25.

This volume consists of reports on the health situation of 157 countries and territories throughout the world during the period 1954-56, together with a general survey or synthesis of salient trends and problems. The individual reports were prepared by the governments as a step towards the fulfillment of WHO's constitutional requirement that each Member State shall report to it annually "on the action taken and progress achieved in improving the health of its people." They will in turn provide a basis for further action directed towards the particular health problems and requirements of the various countries and territories. It is clear from the many different patterns that emerge that such action, to be practicable and effective, must be closely conditioned by the state of development, economic and educational background, climatic and geographical situation in each case.—[From *Trop. Med. & Hyg. News* 8 (1959) 13.]

The first 95 pages of this over-sized volume comprises a comprehensive general survey. The second part, "Country Reports," contains the reports submitted by the different governments, divided into six sections according to the WHO Regions (Africa, the Americas, South-East Asia, Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, and Western Pacific). Each report is preceded, in small type, by a general orientation statement containing background information about location, population, government and various other pertinent features, these sections in total constituting a veritable encyclopedia.

The reports themselves, which in total represent a tremendous accomplishment, deal primarily with the organization and facilities of the health services, and were evidently prepared on the basis of an outline which also called for other data, including staff and training. With respect to activities directed against particular diseases there is much

variability, depending on local conditions—and, probably, the special interests of the reporting authorities.

The reports are not designed to include statistical data on the prevalence of the various diseases. Consequently, an attempt to derive a global picture of leprosy would not be worth the effort. Spot-checking a number of reports: The U. S. A. says nothing of leprosy or the leprosarium, obviously because the matter is so relatively unimportant; it is not so obvious why the U.S.S.R. does not. Unexpectedly, the report from the Philippines is also silent about the matter. Among the 80 government hospitals, it is said, there are 5 which provide specialized services, but the leprosaria—of which in fact there are 8—are not included among them. It is understandable why the U.K. says nothing of leprosy since it is not endemic there, but not why Spain ignores the subject although France, Portugal and Italy do not. In a complete check of the 31 reports from the African Region it was found that only 3 (from Bechuanaland, British Somaliland, and São Tomé and Príncipe) make no mention of leprosy. Sometimes the items are informative, often only incidental; surprisingly little is said on the subject by Nigeria. Curiously, the report for St. Helena (pop. 4,642) mentions a station for leprosy patients “(although [it] has not been used for many years, since the disease has died out).” —H. W. W.

The Status of World Health, in Outline Text and Chart. [U.S.P.H.S.] Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1959, 80 pp., \$1.25.

This compilation, prepared by the U. S. Public Health Service for the Committee on Government Operations, United States Senate, and its Subcommittee on Reorganization and International Organizations, is introduced by a foreword by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, chairman of the subcommittee. Part 1 (with 5 sections) deals with world population, Part 2 (5 sections) with health indices, Part 3 (25 sections) with specific disease problems, and Part 4 (6 sections) with health resources. Each section is brief, never more than a page of text and usually considerably less, and each is illustrated by a chart or graph, many of which are folded inserts. Of the 13 infectious diseases dealt with, malaria is given the most space (4 sections). There are two paragraphs in leprosy, and an adaptation of the distribution chart put out by the American Geographical Society in 1953. This compilation is a valuable companion to the WHO report on the world health situation (preceding review).—H. W. W.