

TO THE EDITOR:

I have acquired a copy of a recent revision of the Constitution and Bye-laws of the *International Leprosy Association*, based on an action taken during the recent International Congress of Leprology held in Rio de Janeiro, [THE JOURNAL **31** (1963) 462 and 470].

This new revision, without pagination and without any indication of its source (i.e., by what or whom it was printed) bears only the signature of the Secretary-Treasurer of the ILA. Detailed check of it against the 1954 version as published in THE JOURNAL, with certain changes made at the Tokyo Congress in 1958 in mind, shows that there

is only one new change. That is a single sentence added to an item of the Bye-laws, quite unrelated to its immediate context.

The revision is supposed to pertain to the products of a certain class of meeting. To clarify that point it must be understood that the Constitution contemplates, without stating the fact precisely, that two kinds of meetings may be held. To quote:

6. Meetings.—It shall be a purpose of the Association to hold *general meetings or congresses* at such intervals and under such conditions as may be determined by the Council (italics added).

It is not clear at this point whether or not "general meetings" and "congresses" are synonymous, or are alternative terms, but that they would be alternatives is made certain later—although not clearly.

Section 5(d) of the Bye-laws provides for two kinds of congresses, (1) convened by the Association [obviously at its own expense] and presided over by its President; or (2) "convened and supported by another entity, such as a government, with the Association cooperating . . ." in which event the presiding officer may be chosen locally—which has always been the case at our quinquennial congresses.

The next paragraph pertains to meetings of *the Association as such*, and as revised at Rio it now reads (the added part in italics):

(e) All addresses and scientific papers read before a meeting of the Association as such shall be the property of the Association, and shall be forwarded by the Secretary concerned to the *Journal* of the Association to be considered for publication. *If, however, notice has not been received by the authors within three months from the date of receipt by the Editor that the papers have been accepted and will appear in the Journal in the near future, the authors will be permitted to withdraw them and offer them for publication elsewhere.*

Since there has never been a meeting of *the Association as such*, nor is there likely to be any in view of the limited finances, the purpose of the amendment is not evident.

It cannot apply to Congresses such as have been held, for in every instance all addresses and scientific papers have been regarded as the property of the Congress for publication in its *Transactions*. Before Rio, where he was unable to be present, the editor always selected, from among the papers presented, a few for publication in the Congress Number of THE JOURNAL, and—for lack of definite right to them—obtained the permission of the Congress authorities for such use. The authors were not necessarily notified, for they had submitted their manuscripts with the expectation they would be published in the *Transactions*, but there was often occasion to correspond with them about the papers selected for use in THE JOURNAL.

That these parts of the Bye-laws should be radically revised is evident, but the revision adopted at Rio and especially distributed by the Secretary of the Association is not pertinent or helpful. It only serves to confuse the matter.

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