

PART 2 OF THIS ISSUE OF *THE JOURNAL*
CONFERENCE ON LEPROSY RESEARCH

This issue of *THE JOURNAL* is published in two parts, the second and larger of which reports the *Proceedings* of a conference, with international participation, sponsored by the Leonard Wood Memorial (American Leprosy Foundation) and the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, D. C., "seeking ways," according to the original announcement of the conference, "to break through a 91-year-old impasse that has blocked research efforts" in the long study of leprosy. The impasse to which the announcement referred is the inability of scientific investigators to devise effective and reliable methods for growing *Mycobacterium leprae* in artificial culture in the laboratory.

The Program Committee of the Leonard Wood Memorial, headed by Dr. Chapman H. Binford, Medical Director of the Memorial, invited approximately one hundred and fifty scientific experts in various fields to assemble for a four-day conference in Washington, May 11-14, 1965, to discuss this and closely related problems. A substantial number of those invited to participate were experts, not in the field of leprosy, but in other disciplines in microbiology, who had been successful, after long effort, in laboratory growth of bacteria and fungi that had long resisted all attempts to cultivate them artificially.

In order to inform and stimulate these investigators, in turn, the Program Committee arranged for each day of the Conference a number

of talks on clinical and epidemiologic aspects of leprosy as a disease rather than simply as a laboratory problem.

The attendance at the Conference was highly gratifying, and it is worth noting that the participants gathered in Washington largely at their own expense, or financed their travel through their research institutions or governments.

The Conference consisted of semiformal papers and free discussions. The latter were considered as of as much importance as the former. It is no exaggeration to say that the experts in other fields furnished significant leads to investigators presently engaged in laboratory research on leprosy, and that the deliberations of the Conference as a whole stimulated investigators who have had success in other fields to devote some of their attention to the baffling problem of leprosy. It is believed that in these two ways leprosy research will be advanced.

The *Proceedings*, which are carried as Part 2 of this issue of THE JOURNAL, give a verbatim report of the papers and the discussions that followed them. The Editorial Board of THE JOURNAL, many of whom were present at the Conference, believes that a wider distribution of the information and understanding developed at the Conference, achieved through the pages of THE JOURNAL, will be of lasting value.

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