

## SESSION 1—11 MAY 1965

OPENING AND WELCOMING  
REMARKS

**Dr. Binford.** Last year, just before the meeting of the Advisory Medical Board, the idea was generated that it was time to have another get together of research workers in leprosy. A research symposium organized by my predecessor, Dr. J. A. Doull was held at the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health in 1961. We thought that four years later there should be another meeting at which investigators in this and other countries could come together to consider certain problems still unsolved in leprosy. Our Advisory Medical Board approved, and General Blumberg, The Director of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, agreed to cooperate and work with us. So plans went ahead for the meeting that will begin today. I introduce to you Brig. General Joseph M. Blumberg, Director of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology.

**General Blumberg.** Dr. Binford, Mr. Crowther, distinguished guests, and visitors, I am listed on the program as just for welcome. I would like to emphasize how welcome you are, however. You picked a beautiful time to be in Washington. I shall feel sorry for you sitting here all day for the next three or four days not having a chance to see your surroundings.

Cures for leprosy have been reported for centuries. In biblical times, as we read in Leviticus, it was believed that certain powers existed for cleansing the leper. The disease portrayed might not have been leprosy. It could have been eczema or psoriasis, scabies or one of a variety of illnesses that are recorded in history about leprosy. Today we know that leprosy can be and is being treated and will eventually, in essence, disappear from the earth. It is far

from doing that now. I do not know how many cases of leprosy there are in the world today. The number varies in different countries. Representatives from 12 to 14 countries are in this room today, many of whom come from countries that still have a great deal of leprosy. In this country we have about 700 reported or known cases. The actual number is probably somewhere between 1,000 and 2,000. In the world as a whole the figure is probably more than 5, 6, or 7 million cases. Leprosy tends to decline in countries in which scientific medicine is practiced, and the economics and health of the people are advanced, as in the case of tuberculosis and typhoid fever.

I notice, in going over your conference program for this morning, that you are covering the gamut of leprosy in all its aspects, with experts here on cultivation, metabolism, differential diagnosis, environmental factors, paleopathology and other aspects of the disease. The program goes on through pathology, tissue culture, animal inoculation, immunology, electron-microscopy, epidemiology, genetics and treatment. You have a great deal in store for you.

Now for the benefit of some who have never been in the Institute before, I would like to tell you something about the Institute you are in (Gen. Blumberg showed a series of slides). In 1862, during the Civil War the Army Medical Museum was founded. Immediately after World War II, in 1946, it became the Army Institute of Pathology. In 1949, with the organization of the Department of Defense, it became the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. We are under Army management today as a tri-service organization, with staff and

service from the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. In addition, we have been designated the Central Institute of Pathology for the Veterans Administration. In all, we have had a variety of homes; during the Civil War we had three. We were in Ford's Theater Building for 20 years, and then at a building constructed in 1887 on Independence Avenue. We have an Annex there today. We moved out of that into our new building with a budget unfortunately inadequate to complete construction plans. We rotate the directorship between the Army, the Navy and the Air Force on the basis of a tenure of four years. We have a Board of Governors for matters of policy consisting of the three surgeons general of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, and a scientific advisory board of civilian consultants representing many disciplines within the fields of medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine. On a day-to-day basis Dr. Robert E. Stowell is the Scientific Director. The Deputies at present are Capt. Bruce H. Smith of the U.S. Navy and Lt. Col. D. Auld of the U.S. Air Force. We are divided into four major departments. The old Museum still exists in the old building on Independence Avenue; it is open to the public every day. The Department of Pathology, which is the heart of the Institute, has a supporting medical illustration service and the American Registry of Pathology for the registry and study of many special pathologic states. In the Department are nine main divisions; within one, the Geographic Pathology Division, is a branch for mycobacterial diseases, of which Dr. Binford is the chief. It covers leprosy and related diseases. The Department of Pathology as a whole is under Dr. E. B. Helwig, who just yesterday received the Department of Defense distinguished civil service award, a high honor not only for him but also for this Institute. Among the registries we have one for leprosy, which is headed up by Dr. Binford. In this Registry there are today 1,838 registered cases. In cooperation with a committee for training aides, the Registry is currently preparing clinical and histopathologic slides relating to leprosy and other mycobacterial diseases.

With these comments I believe you are now ready to get down to the meat of the matter. I would like to reiterate that we hope your stay here will be pleasant. I know it will be informative.

**Dr. Binford.** The next speaker will be Mr. C. I. Crowther, the President of the Leonard Wood Memorial. Mr. Crowther was Executive Director of the Near East Foundation for many years, during which he worked with the Leonard Wood Memorial in a fiscal capacity. In 1958, when Mr. Perry Burgess retired, Mr. Crowther became President of the Memorial.

**Mr. Crowther.** General Blumberg and distinguished guests: I was much interested by General Blumberg's remarks, which show how effective the military services are in our field. It is a privilege and a pleasure for me, on behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Advisory Medical Board of the Memorial, to welcome you to Washington and to the opening session of this Leprosy Research Conference. The roster, including some 150 individuals from many lands, who will participate in all or part of the discussions, reads like a list of long time friends. I am sure most of you will find among those present fellow workers with common interests and goals, with whom it will be a privilege to exchange ideas and accomplishments once again. To those of you who are taking part in our deliberations for the first time, I extend an especially warm welcome to join the small but select circle of scientists who are dedicating their lives to study of the disease that for hundreds of years has been known as leprosy to a frightened world. Dr. Binford and his committee have prepared a challenging and significant program for these four days. It is too much to expect that out of this meeting will come the scientific knowledge necessary to rid the world of this disease. It is but a step in the right direction. How great a step will be determined when the findings of your deliberations are written up and made available to all those who could not be with us at this time.

In facing a distinguished group such as

this it is obviously impractical to pick out any individuals and to extend to them a special welcome. I shall not attempt that, but I would like to make brief reference to three people who were prevented by illness, in each case, from attending today. Lieut. General Leonard D. Heaton, Surgeon General of the Army, is in the hospital. He wrote: "Will you please pass on my greetings and best wishes to those attending the symposium and express my regrets for not being able to attend." Our valued associate, Dr. J. Convit of Venezuela, was scheduled for an important part in this series of meetings, but unfortunately, Mrs. Convit is ill; he did not feel that he could leave her. Finally I should speak of our old associate Dr. José Fernández, President of the International Leprosy Association. Most of you know that some time ago he was stricken seriously ill and is having a slow and hard fight for recovery. In view of the fact that he is President of our International Leprosy Association, I prepared a cablegram which I would like to send to him in the name of this meeting. "One hundred and fifty scientists gathered in Washington for the Leonard Wood Memorial Conference on Leprosy send you greetings and best wishes for continuing improvement." I assume that you will agree to sending this cablegram by way of welcome to the meeting in his absence.<sup>1</sup>

I hope you will find all discussions interesting. Dr. Binford is a tough task master. He has outlined enough here to keep

us busy for two weeks. But we will try to get the job done in one week.

**Dr. Binford.** Thank you, Mr. Crowther. This meeting was planned, as you have been told in the preliminary invitation to participate, to tackle some of the unsolved problems in leprosy. The primary unsolved problem is that of the cultivation of *Mycobacterium leprae*. We have with us today a number of scientists who have not actually worked in leprosy, either clinically or in the laboratory, and for this reason have planned this conference so that each day, usually at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions, we shall have an authority speak on leprosy as a disease. We have told these speakers that we are not asking them for major new ideas for research but to present, for the education of all of us, leprosy as a disease.

The first speaker today is a man who has had 30 years' experience with leprosy in Africa. Dr. Stanley G. Browne is currently the Head of the Leprosy Research Unit in Uzuakoli in Nigeria. He is very active in leprosy research and in research on other tropical diseases. Looking over the titles of articles he wrote in 1963, as recorded in the annual report of his research institute for that year, I noted that although the majority of 15 articles he contributed that year concerned leprosy, other diseases such as sarcoidosis and filariasis were included. I noted too, that in 1963 he gave a total of 20 lectures in 9 different countries. Dr. Browne, I take great pleasure in welcoming you to this platform. We look forward to your discussion on "The variegated clinical pattern of leprosy."

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Fernández died on July 21, 1965. See *Editorial* by R. G. Cochrane, *Internat. J. Leprosy* 33 (1965) 349-350.