SESSION 8—14 MAY 1965

Chairman: J. H. Hanks

Dr. Hanks. It is a great pleasure and honor to introduce to you a man who needs no introduction—one of our most famous workers in the field of leprosy. He has played a key role in certain parts of the leprosy problem for many years. Dr. Dharmendra began his work in leprosy with Dr. John Lowe at the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine in 1933. In 1942 he became head of the leprosy section in the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine, and, when the Central Leprosy Teaching and Research Institute was established, he was called to this post, at Chingleput in the State of Madras.

Dr. Dharmendra, I believe, was the first man to realize that work was necessary to prepare purified reagents for performance of skin tests. He made the first effort to obtain antigen preparations that could be dealt with on a weight basis. If any of you wish to know where you can look for basic knowledge on the lepromin test itself, and its manifold aspects, you should read "The lepromin test" by Dr. Dharmendra, published under the auspices of BELRA in 1948.

Another notable landmark has been entitled "Notes on Leprosy." I am happy to inform you that this is now in the course of preparation as a second edition.

All of us know Dr. Dharmendra so well that I merely need to say, here he is, and we are delighted to hear from him.

Leprosy Research in India

Dharmendra, M. D.†

It is indeed very encouraging and gratifying to see leprosy research being carried out at present at a fairly large number of centres in various countries, including some where the disease does not create any special problem. It is all the more heartening to see that leprosy research is no longer confined to leprologists, and that workers in various other disciplines in science are taking increasing interest and lending their support in the search for the solution of many of the unresolved problems with respect to the causative organism and the disease it causes.

Under such circumstances one is apt to lose sight of the importance of some early work done by a small number of workers under conditions much less favorable than those available at present and under various handicaps. It may be advantageous, therefore, to have a retrospective look in the field of leprosy research. That is the author's excuse for beginning this paper with reference to early research work in India.

THE FIRST FULL-TIME LEPROSY RESEARCH CENTER IN THE WORLD

Establishment of the Centre. India is responsible for about one-fifth of the total leprosy of the world. It has, therefore, been in the fitness of things that it has also