

## Olaf K. Skinsnes

### New Editor of The Journal

At the general meeting of the International Leprosy Association, held at the Imperial College of Science in London, 20 September 1968, during the course of the Ninth International Leprosy Congress, and on the unanimous recommendation of the Officers and Council of the Association, Dr. Olaf K. Skinsnes, Professor of Pathology at the University of Hawaii, was elected Editor of the *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY*. The Council, in its meetings before the general session of members, had discussed Dr. Skinsnes' unique combination of qualities for editorship, including his literary skill as an author of scientific papers and his broad experience with current leprosy problems and his devotion to research and leprosy control.

The selection of Dr. Skinsnes was in part a testimony of recognition of his active and leading part in the study of leprosy problems in the Orient. His training, as noted below, was in the field of pathology, a science generally recognized as basic in the several disciplines of medicine, and it was as a pathologist that he began his productive career in leprosy research. But his wide interests and broad understanding soon brought him into responsible and authoritative positions in clinical and epidemiologic investigation and concern with the general principles of leprosy treatment and sanatorium and other procedures for leprosy care. He has long been known to members of the ILA for his decade of service at the famous Hay Ling Chau leprosy sanatorium in Hong Kong.

Olaf Skinsnes was born of medical missionary parentage on 20 April 1917 at Sinyang, Honan, China. His early education was in the American school in Kikungshan, China. He secured his college and professional education in the United States, first at the University of Minnesota, then at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, where he graduated B.A. in 1939, and then



Olaf K. Skinsnes, M.D.

at the University of Chicago, where, in the course of eight years, 1939-1947, he acquired the Master of Science, Doctor of Medicine, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. He took his internship at the New York Hospital of the Cornell University Medical Center in New York City.

After his internship he returned to the Orient as Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in Pathology at the University of Hong Kong. Ten years later, in 1959, he returned, as Professor of Pathology, to the school where he had spent his medical preparatory years, the University of Chicago. Here he distinguished himself in teaching, in hospital service in general pathology, and in research on body defense mechanisms against disease and the characteristics of granulomatous infiltration, with special attention to leprosy.

Throughout his Chicago years he maintained close connections with professional colleagues in the Orient, and frequently returned to Hong Kong on special projects. In the Government clinics and the

Hay Ling Chau Leprosarium he had a continuing base of operations, which made material for study available to him, and kept him abreast of clinical practice, administrative problems in leprosy control, and those collateral subjects of interest in art and history that characterize him as a scholar as well as a scientific teacher and investigator. He cooperated actively with N. D. Fraser in the development of the Hay Ling Chau Leprosarium. In these relationships he became an expert on oriental history and art. He is a noted collector, with a remarkable assemblage of rare ceramics. These interests, it may be noted, are shared by his family.

His acceptance, in 1967, of the position of Professor of Pathology at the University

of Hawaii, a state often called the "cross-roads of the Pacific," represents in a large way this fusion of interest in eastern and western medical cultures. It came after 20 years of combined service in these two fields, and would seem to offer, for the future, an unusual outlook on leprosy problems in both their baffling and their encouraging aspects. He is well qualified to take advantage of this opportunity. The outgoing Editor of *THE JOURNAL* is sure he expresses the warm feeling of all the members of the ILA in congratulating Dr. Skinsnes on his past achievements, and wishing him success in his new academic associations and the editorship of the *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY*.

—E. R. L.