

NEWS and NOTES

This department furnishes information concerning institutions, organizations, and individuals engaged in work on leprosy and other mycobacterial diseases, and makes note of scientific meetings and other matters of interest.

International Society of Tropical Dermatology

The Second World Congress of the International Society of Tropical Dermatology was held in Kyoto, Japan, 15-20 August 1969. Participating leprologists who are also concerned with tropical dermatology found much to interest them at the Congress, and regretted that the clashing of concurrent sessions deprived them of opportunities of profiting from the papers given by experts on, e.g., leishmaniasis or mycoses or the treponematoses. Many papers listed on the program were not presented, in the absence of the authors. While no epoch-making new work was reported, the Congress provided a forum for exchange of ideas and meeting of workers in related branches of medicine.

By general consent, the sessions on leprosy (accorded a generous allotment of time by the Congress planners) were among the best, and Dr. R. J. W. Rees is to be congratulated on his work in organizing this Sessional Theme. Rehabilitation received scant notice, but therapy was well discussed. Dr. S. G. Browne reviewed the modern approach to the drug treatment of leprosy, and Dr. M. F. R. Waters examined the methodology of drug trials in man and the experimental animal, while Drs. J. C. Gatti, J. Languillon, D. V. Opromola and F. C. Luis made other important contributions. In the session on "Reaction in Leprosy," thalidomide was the only drug reported in detail. "The Pathogenesis of Leprosy" provided excellent papers by Drs. R. J. W. Rees, W. E. Bullock, K. A. Kolesov and S. Nishimura, which proved of great interest to visitors whose primary concern was with other dermatoses.

The Round Table Conference on "Therapy of Leprosy" under the chairmanship of Dr. S. G. Browne, brought together Drs. J. Languillon, J. H. S. Pettit, R. J. W. Rees

and M. F. R. Waters in a discussion which, after a slow start, developed into a very stimulating exchange of views. Far from concluding tamely, the Round Table was prolonged at the request of the audience so as to deal with practical points of low-dose dapsone therapy and the indications for clofazimine (Geigy 663).

The symposium on "Mycobacterial Infections" under the chairmanship of Professor R. D. Azulay was of great interest to leprologists, bringing together, as it did, workers experienced in *M. ulcerans* infections, sarcoidosis and other conditions.—S. G. BROWNE

CIOMS Conference on Medical Research

A Round Table Conference on "Medical Research: priorities and responsibilities," organized by CIOMS (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences) with the assistance of the World Health Organization and UNESCO, was held at the WHO Headquarters, Geneva, 8-10 October 1969.

Eminent scientists and administrators of government research councils from many countries were present, in addition to representatives from many of the international bodies that form the Council. The International Leprosy Association (a member of the Council) was represented by its Secretary-Treasurer (Dr. S. G. Browne). Several of the subjects discussed had direct relevance to matters that concern both field and laboratory workers in leprosy.

Genetic configuration may determine individual responses to drug metabolism, such as isoniazid inactivation, adverse reactions associated with glucose-6-PD deficiency and sensitivity to certain anesthetics. Observed variation in response to dapsone, and delayed response to drugs used in leprosy, may be genetically determined.

The importance of clinical pharmacology and experimental approach to therapeutics was repeatedly stressed. Adequately controlled clinical trials point the way forward in leprosy. Since much work is being devoted to research on new drugs, the time is ripe to stress the need to train in statistical methods and accurate clinical observation the coming generation of scientifically oriented leprosy investigators. More work is needed on the resemblances and dissimilarities in the ways in which experimental animals and man metabolize drugs. After all, man is still the final arbiter of the efficacy of drugs used to combat leprosy.

A plea was registered—a plea that will find a ready echo from leprologists—that the accepted results of research be applied in the field. The gap is still far too wide, and the time-lag far too long, between demonstration and application. The doctor must become increasingly aware of, and take responsibility for, the results of his own successful intervention in the fields of disease control. In leprosy it is not enough to render a patient noncontagious; the clinician must see that the “cured” patient is socially as well as medically rehabilitated into society, able to resume his place as a dignified and independent individual. Thus rehabilitation of the handicapped is seen to be an essential part of treatment.

The motivation of those engaged in medical research was referred to. Public funds have to be carefully allocated, bearing in mind the need for better means of controlling disease and curing patients. It is the individualistic worker filled with an insatiable curiosity and carrying over into adult life his childhood “play,” who in the main makes the best investigator. If, in pushing forward the priorities of knowledge, he discovers facts of direct benefit to mankind, then his work is doubly rewarding.

The need for greater stress on the scientific approach to epidemiologic problems was discussed. With new investigative models and methods now available, the standard and efficacy of much evaluation of leprosy field research and control programs should show marked improvement. Leprosy cannot be considered in isolation from other endemic diseases, or apart from the whole human ecologic environment. Furthermore, unless workers are able to keep abreast of progress in other branches, leprosy research, both in the field and in the laboratory, may fail to profit from recent developments in other realms of knowledge; thanks to some such developments, subjects formerly on the fringe have now become crucial.

The Secretary-Treasurer of the International Leprosy Association entered a plea for increased participation of the research centers of the affluent countries in the great problems of the countries of the “Third World.” Such participation would not only become “two-way traffic” in new knowledge and new ideas, but would shed welcome and necessary light on great lacunae of ignorance in matters of nutrition and endemic disease. Identification of a pathogen (and possible vector) is, as we well know in leprosy, but the beginning of wisdom. Visits by research staff, the provision of fellowships and grants, and facilitation of professional contacts, would encourage research into the pressing immediate and remote problems facing the developing countries.

The number of research workers in the biomedical sciences has never been as great as today; yet, paradoxically, there is a real dearth of qualified people in certain fields. Leprosy is one of those fields.—S. G. BROWNE

NEWS ITEMS

India. *Leprosy workers' conference.* The Eleventh All-India Leprosy Workers' Conference, held in New Delhi, 23-25 February 1969, included sessions of the India Association of Leprologists whose President is Dr. V. P. Das. Dr. Dharmendra, President of

the full Conference, devoted his presidential address to socio-economic problems resulting from leprosy. The discussion brought out the need for broad coverage in a leprosy patient's care, from diagnosis to complete rehabilitation. Papers on the che-

moprophylaxis of leprosy were presented by R. V. Wardekar and S. K. Noordeen. A. B. A. Karat, A. Jeevaratnam and P. S. S. Rao spoke on a trial of low doses of DDS in the management of leprosy. L. Wollstein and Miss E. C. T. C. Thistlethwaite, respectively, discussed prostheses and splints, and the place of physiotherapy in treatment clinics. Other presentations were made by G. Newberry Fox, Dr. (Mrs.) S. Karat, C. K. Job, E. P. Fritschi, R. H. Thangaraj, and M. A. Furness. T. N. Jagadisan and V. P. Das praised the work of the voluntary leprosy associations in supplementing government programs—(*From Without the Camp*, No. 292, Oct.—Dec. 1969, p. 71)

New ward at Polambakkan. A new ward at Polambakkan (Chingleput District, Tamil Nadu) was opened on 9 March 1969. Greetings were extended by government authorities, the King and Queen of Belgium and distinguished benefactors. The success of the project owes much to the original planning of the late Dr. Fr. Hemerijckx and the industry of Dr. Claire M. J. Vellut and her colleagues. The operation represents joint action by a Belgian voluntary organization and Indian authorities. The program includes implementation of a survey-education-treatment design, training and supervision of auxiliary staff, frequent refresher courses, clinics "under the trees," laboratory coverage, hospitalization, physiotherapy, reconstructive surgery and follow-up. More than 26,000 patients are registered.—(*From report to THE JOURNAL* by S. G. Browne)

Karigiri Review. Number 2 (1967-1968) of this journal, edited by Mrs. S. Karat and coeditors from the Schieffelin Leprosy Research Sanatorium, and noted on the cover as "for private circulation only," carries a series of articles under the headings: Scientific Section, Review Article, General Topics, Methods and Devices, and Alumni News and Notes. The number represents largely the experience and work of present and past staff members of the Schieffelin Leprosy Research Sanatorium at Karigiri. Some of the articles are reprinted from other journals, some are condensations of recent reports, and, presumably, some may

later be published in other journals. Many have already been carried in abstract in the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY, and others are in the course of abstracting and publication for that journal. The Alumni News and Notes section includes letters to the Editor from former members of the Karigiri team, questions for the Editors and their answers, and a list of former workers at Karagiri whose present addresses are unknown, and much desired.—(ERL)

Rhodesia. Decline in leprosy. Ngomahuru Hospital in Salisbury, 30 miles south of Fort Victoria, is Rhodesia's only leprosy hospital. Established in 1899 by Dutch Reformed Church missionaries, it was taken over by the government in 1927. The number of patients has declined markedly since 1946 (from 612 to 166 in recent years); the drop is attributed partly to success with sulfone drugs in the country, and to the policy of the Ministry of Health toward decentralization and home care.—(*From the Star* (Carville) 29 (1969) 10)

South Vietnam. Leprosy colony. A colony for leprosy patients at Ben San, South Vietnam, 20 miles north of Saigon, operated by the Catholic Daughters of Charity, has been dominated alternately by Viet Cong, U. S. and South Vietnamese troops. Assistance has been furnished to the colony from time to time by the warring factions. The colony has 320 patients, 60 of whom are able to work. A wide variety of occupations are practiced by patients. Father Victor Beret of the colony is hesitant to predict the future in the midst of current hostilities, but is hopeful.—(*From the Star* (Carville) 28 (1969) 15)

United States. ALM-PHS seminar at Carville. Some 25 medical workers from the United States, Jamaica, India, Iran and other countries participated in the Eleventh American Leprosy Missions-Public Health Service Seminar in Carville 11-16 September 1969. It was the second seminar of this type in 1969, and was held because many requests for the first seminar could not be granted because of the great number of applicants.—(*From the Star* (Carville) 29 (1969) 4)

Personals

Dr. Ernesto T. Capurro, former member of the International Leprosy Association and recently Expert in Leprosy for Argentina, on The Leprosy Experts Committee of the WHO, and Vice-Director of the Dirección de Lucha Dermatológica (Leprosy Control organization) of the Public Health Secretary of Argentina, died suddenly in Buenos Aires 21 April 1969, at the age of 53.

On 18 April 1969 the staff and patients at the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital in Carville, Louisiana, honored **Dr. Oliver W. Hasselblad**, President of American Leprosy Missions, Inc. "for his outstanding contributions to world leprosy control." A silver plaque was presented to Dr. Hasselblad in a ceremony at Carville's Tenth Annual Seminar for Overseas Workers.

Dr. G. R. F. Hilson, F. C. Path., member of the leprosy committee of the Medical Research Council, has been named Professor of Bacteriology at the St. Georges Medical School in London. Prof. Hilson is known especially for his studies of the chemotherapy and immunology of experimental leprosy.

Dr. Enrique D. L. Jonquières, Medical Chief of the Dispensario Central de Dermatología (Leprología) and the Dispensario de la Dirección de la Lucha Dermatológica of Buenos Aires, and Contributing Editor of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY for Argentina, has been appointed Assistant Professor of Dermatology in the University of Buenos Aires. His numerous new duties and responsibilities have made it necessary for him to forego the contributing editorship in which he has long and faithfully served THE JOURNAL.