

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.

NEWS ITEMS

India. *New director for Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation.* Dr. M. S. N. Rao has succeeded Dr. R. V. Wardekar as Director of the Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation. Dr. Wardekar will remain attached to the Foundation as its Advisor and will also continue to remain a member of the Foundation's Committee. He has, however, left Wardha permanently for Poona.

Film on leprosy. The film "Protection against leprosy" produced by the Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation for the general public and sold to the films division for circulation through commercial and noncommercial circuits is now available for sale to state governments, educational institutions, medical colleges and private leprosy organizations. The film is in black and white, 35 mm. and 16 mm., 1,950 ft. in length, with a running time of 19 minutes. It is at present available in English, but will soon be dubbed in all 16 languages listed in the Constitution. The film will be shown in all cinema theaters in the country in due course. The price per print of the film for noncommercial use in U.S. \$84.00 for 35 mm. and U.S. \$66.00 for 16 mm., plus excise duty.

United Kingdom. *Award to Dr. S. G. Browne.* The medal of the Royal African Society for "dedicated service to Africa" has been awarded to Dr. S. G. Browne, O.B.E., Chairman of the Editorial Board of *Leprosy Review*. The citation refers to Dr. Browne's 23 years service in the former Belgian Congo as a Baptist medical missionary, followed by seven years in Nigeria, where he was Director of the Leprosy Research Unit at Uzuakoli, and goes on to say, "his unrivalled knowledge of leprosy research, treatment and control has enabled him to travel widely throughout the world on survey and demonstration work, and his prolific writings and programmes

on the subject have done much to change the attitudes of both medical and lay people towards the disease."

West Pakistan. *Marie Adelaide Leprosy Center.* The social service department of the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Center has issued a report covering its activities between 1963 and 1969. The report is divided into the goals and problems of health education; a short history of the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Center and its developments, including the development of an interest-free loan system granted to patients who are able to work independently and responsibly with funds trusted to them in place of charity; education of leprosy patients, including partial support in education for their children, and a social training course combining the social and paramedical training courses to better fit leprosy workers for social as well as medical aspects of the disease; a description of special efforts in leprosy education in the "Leprosy weeks" in Hyderabad and Sukkar; and descriptions of three works in preparation: a comprehensive script entitled "Social Rehabilitation of Leprosy Patients," a play and a novel about the life of a leprosy patient.

"New Life"—a play about leprosy. Dr. I. K. Gill, formerly of the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Center, has written a short play entitled "New Life." The play is written from a health education point of view in order to make people conscious of leprosy so that, knowing the early signs and symptoms of the disease, they may direct the patients to the leprosy hospital instead of excluding them from society.

Mexico. *Asociacion Mexicana de Accion Contra La Lepra.* The officers of the Asociacion Mexicana de Accion Contra La Lepra for 1970-72, elected on 23 April,

include Dr. Fernando Latapí, President, Dr. Amado Saúl, Vice President, Dr. Mario Gomez Vidal, Secretary, and Srita. Concepcion Perez Castro, Treasurer.

Uganda. *East African Leprosy Association.* The first annual general meeting of the East African Leprosy Association was held on 9 April 1970, at Makerere University College, Kampala, Uganda. The Hon. A. H. K. Birgirwenkya was elected Chairman of the Association. Drs. A. P. Bulengo and I. S. Kadama were elected vice Chairmen of the Tanzania and Uganda National Branch Councils respectively; Mr. G. V. W. Anderson, Hon. Secretary of the Interstate Council; and Drs. A. R. H. B. Verhagen, H. W. Wheate and Norman Kanyarutoke, Hon. Secretaries of the Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda National Branch Councils respectively. The registered office of the Association will be in Nairobi, and the *East African Leprosy Bulletin* was adopted as the official organ of the Association.

Belgium. *Tribute to the late Dr. Fr. Hemerijckx.* On Sunday, June 7, a memorial service was held for Dr. Hemerijckx. This time was set aside also for the unveiling of a memorial statue in Grimbergen and the announcement of the creation of the "Fonds Docteur Hemerijckx" (Dr. Hemerijckx Memorial Fund). A sermon paid tribute to the life and activities of the doctor, who for 40 years had devoted himself to the well-being of leprosy sufferers, and especially to his work in the Congo from 1929 onwards, and then from 1955 in India.

Vietnam. *Dakkia Leprosarium.* Dakkia Leprosarium is situated five kilometers west of Kontum. Since superstitions and ignorance about leprosy persist, the 12 nuns and more than 700 Montagnards at Dakkia carry on their work without fear of interference or attack. During decades of war in Vietnam the leprosarium has remained safe. Dakkia was founded in 1920 by a Frenchman, M. Jerusalem. In 1938 the leprosarium came under charge of the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul, a Catholic order from France. Not until 1954 did the leprosarium begin to expand and offer

effective medical treatment. With government transportation, patients are now brought from villages all over the highlands. Funds for construction are donated periodically by Misereor, a German relief organization. The Vietnamese government, through the Ministry of Health, Leprosy Division, contributes a daily stipend for each of the 300 leprosy patients at Dakkia. Dakkia covers more than 10 acres and includes a dispensary, permanent housing for Montagnard families, schools, nursery and dormitories for the 250 children, a living complex for 12 sisters, a chapel, service buildings, gardens and a Montagnard cemetery. The dispensary has become too small to accommodate even the few patients who require constant care. Construction has already started on a new infirmary. The sisters emphasize that their purpose is to avoid interfering with the Montagnard culture and to reinforce traditional village customs. A routine enforces separation of children from their parents but they spend weekends at home. A small Montagnard village stands just outside the boundary of the leprosarium, populated by former leprosy patients and their families.

Malawi. *The Malawi Leprosy Control Project.* The Interim Report of the Leprosy Control Project in Malawi, conducted by the British Leprosy Relief Association (LEPRA), has recently been published. It deals with the first four years of activity since the project was inaugurated in 1966. Details of the progress achieved were given in the Report by Dr. B. David Molesworth that recently appeared in *Leprosy Review* 40 (1969) 237. Already, more than 10,000 leprosy patients have been admitted to treatment; over 46,000 children under 15 years of age have received BCG vaccination; whole population surveys in selected villages and in selected groups have been undertaken; and regular mobile circuits (by motor vehicle, or bicycle) have brought diagnosis, treatment and education in the use of anesthetic extremities within the reach of the most isolated villages within the project area. In retrospect, the wisdom of adhering to the priority of initiating and establishing the Project as a demonstration model for the control of leprosy

balanced against the considerable research potentials in a project of this magnitude, has been made clear since within a period of only four years, 10,000 leprosy patients have been brought under treatment. However, as soon as the Project was firmly established, other research projects were introduced and are being added as the opportunities arise. 1. The Malawi Project has joined an international study of trials on the slow release derivative of dapsone—DADDS—which is given by injection once every 75 days. Preliminary results are encouraging. 2. Another study has as its objective the evaluation of Lamprene and

thalidomide as alternatives to corticosteroids for the treatment of serious reactional episodes in patients with lepromatous leprosy. 3. A study has just been initiated to determine whether patients with leprosy who deteriorate despite treatment with dapsone have become resistant to the drug. 4. Recent studies in London and Oxford have shown unexpectedly that leprosy bacilli are found in the muscles of patients in both the early stage of the infection and in treated patients whose skin smears are negative. These observations will now be further investigated on selected patients in the Project.