

## 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.*

**Argentina.** *VIII Jornadas Argentinas de Leprologia.* On 7-8 September 1974, the Sociedad Argentina de Leprologia held special scientific meetings commemorating its 20th anniversary. Two hundred and thirty dermatoleprologists from Argentina and various countries abroad participated in the meetings. The subjects discussed covered the broad spectrum of leprosy problems being faced in the world today.

The main features of the program were lectures and discussions presented by many well-known leprologists such as: Drs. Jopling, Rabello, Serial and Arcuri on indeterminate leprosy and its classification, along with an iconographical presentation of many cases; Dr. Browne on the training of medical auxiliary workers; Dr. Brubaker discussed leprosy in the Americas; Prof. El Zawahry commented on leprosy in the Middle East; Prof. F. da Cruz Sobral on leprosy epidemiology in the Portuguese Timor; Drs. Freerksen, Shepard, Waters and Saul on therapy and the latest therapeutic advances; Dr. Aguiar Pupo on the tropical origin of leprosy; M. Ayala Uribe on leprosy in the Bible; Dr. A. Rotberg on leprosy prevention; and Dr. J. Rodriguez on reversal reaction.

The "Jornadas" were adjourned by Dr. Arguello Pitt; Dr. Carlos Consigli served as the president and Dr. Juan Carlos Gatti as the coordinating secretary.—(*Adapted from summary by Dr. J. E. Cardama*)

**Brazil.** *The Third World Congress of the International Society of Tropical Dermatology*, was held in Sao Paulo, 1-5 September 1974.

The leprosy session, under the chairmanship of Prof. R. D. Azulay, had a symposium all to itself with about 25 papers presented as "free communications." Though no new material was presented in these papers, they engendered vigorous discussion among the participants. Other subjects of interest to leprologists included vasculitis, skin lesions of atypical mycobacterioses, pigmentation, and such conditions as cutaneous

leishmaniasis. A welcome feature of the Congress was the presence, at the leprosy sessions, of dermatologists and research workers who were attracted by the growing relevance to their own subject of leprosy investigations. Another interesting feature was the interest shown by leprosy workers in diverse tropical dermatoses and their contributions in these sessions.

At the General Assembly of Members, Dr. Arthur Rook (Cambridge) was elected president of the International Society of Tropical Dermatology, and Dr. S. G. Browne to the Board of Directors.—S. G. Browne

**England.** *Golden Jubilee of the British Leprosy Relief Association.* The launching of BELRA occurred in January 1924, under the patronage of the Prince of Wales. The enthusiasm and great authority of Sir Leonard Rogers, in particular, gave importance and official standing to the Association from its beginning, and branches were formed in several countries administered by Britain. The Indian branch known for many years as the Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh, has served independent India in a most outstanding way.

The main emphases of BELRA were on leprosy control from the beginning. The development of leprosy control work in territories administered by Britain overseas owed a great deal to visits made by the medical secretary of BELRA. In several countries it was as a result of such visits, and the practical support of BELRA in both finance and personnel, that leprosy control work really began. The LEPROA leprosy eradication project in Malawi is a continuing example of BELRA's activities in this sphere.

Certain other aspects of the Association's work stand out. In 1928 *Leprosy Notes* was introduced, and developed into the *Leprosy Review* by 1931. In 1933 LEPROA's overseas staff was founded, following the Reverend Dr. Clayton's visit to West Africa during the previous year. The importance of early treatment had long been recognized, but it was

not until 1937 that steps were taken to set up the Child Adoption Scheme, when the first 12 children became adopted. This scheme provided the money needed to ensure the best treatment of children, thus preventing them from becoming disabled. Today more than 29,000 children receive their treatment at home as a result of grants made to organizations in India and Africa from the successor to the Child Adoption Scheme, the Children's Fund.

In 1964 BELRA became LEPRO. Now in this its jubilee year, the optimism shown throughout the history of the Association is probably more surely based than it ever has been. LEPRO is becoming more involved with leprosy research, since it is felt that the ultimate solution to the problem lies in finding quicker-acting drugs or a prophylactic. It is hoped that during the next 50 years there is every chance that the original object of the Association—the eradication of leprosy—will be achieved, not only from the British Empire as it then was, but from the world.

*Lepra Medical Advisory Board.* The Executive Committee of LEPRO has decided that the former Medical Committee should be replaced by a Medical Advisory Board (MAB). Members of the MAB would be appointed for three years, initially with the possibility of further appointments, provided they are still engaged in the medical discipline they were originally appointed to cover.

The following members have accepted appointment:

1. Clinical—Dr. W. H. Jopling
2. Clinical Research—Dr. C. McDougall
3. Epidemiology—Dr. T. Meade
4. Editor of *Leprosy Review*—  
Dr. T. F. Davey
5. Field Work—Dr. D. Molesworth
6. Histopathology—Dr. D. Harmen
7. Immunology—Prof. J. L. Turk
8. Medical Education—Dr. C. McDougall
9. Microbiology—Dr. R. J. W. Rees
10. Neurology—Prof. G. Weddell
11. Pathology—Dr. D. S. Ridley
12. Pharmacology—Dr. G. Ellard

—(Adapted from *Lepr. Rev.* 45 [1974] 329-332)

*New LEPRO film: "Leprosy."* To be released in autumn is a new film for the general public entitled "Leprosy" and designed to present the facts about leprosy in their

present day setting. Leprosy has now been brought into the category of diseases that are yielding to scientific research. This should do much to orient human societies to regard it as a disease like any other and something with which it is their duty to deal. There is much yet to be accomplished and given a reasonable hope of ultimate success, men are prepared to make greater efforts to develop what they have. If they are to do this, however, they must first be convinced that their efforts will not be wasted. This is where a body like LEPRO has an invaluable part to play, and for this reason we should be grateful to the Executive Committee for commissioning the production of this film. All who view this film will see the promise of the future and also what is possible to achieve in the present.—(Adapted from *Lepr. Rev.* 45 [1974] 332-333)

#### **Ethiopia. ALERT Annual Report 1974.**

This 89-page report covers a large amount of material which is divided up into the following sections: organization, general information, training department, service department, Armauer Hansen Research Institute, and ALERT finances. At the end of 1974 Professor Charles Leithhead resigned as chairman of the Board. Added to the senior staff were Dr. Berhanu Getahun and Ato Isaias Tessema who were assigned by the Ethiopian Ministry of Public Health. Dr. Getahun will serve as director of service and deputy executive director, and Mr. Tessema as chief administrator of the Princess Zenebework Hospital. The year 1974 has been one of many ups and downs with the political situation in Ethiopia interfering with some of the work being conducted by ALERT. The financial situation has been quite varied during 1974 due to a shortfall in contributions. A thorough detailed evaluation of ALERT, which took place in January 1974, provided some constructive guidelines for the future of ALERT with one of the main recommendations being that a long-term financial security for ALERT be worked out. ELP has been taking great interest in ALERT's financial support and future development and is now represented on the Board of Directors.

The extension of the agreement between ALERT and the Ethiopian Government, revised and now valid up to 11 December 1980, is also a positive sign of the Ethiopian Gov-

ernment's future support and cooperation with ALERT. An integrated budget is included in the new agreement which is of great advantage to ALERT.

A pension insurance plan was established for non-Ministry employed staff of ALERT and is a positive move of great value for the institute. The year 1974, according to the report, has seen many positive results in training as well as in leprosy control and service. One more year of valid experience has been added to ALERT's lifetime.—(*Adapted from ALERT Annual Report 1974*)

**Guatemala.** *A new institute of dermatology inaugurated in Guatemala City in 1973.* Dr. Fernando Cordero, Professor of Dermatology, is the chief of the institute which is devoted to taking care of skin diseases and leprosy patients, and to the study of these types of diseases.

The seat of the institute, sponsored by a private association against leprosy, is located in the National Hospital Ramiro Galvez in Guatemala.—Amado Saul

**India.** *Seminar on Leprosy 1974.* A two day seminar was held in Bombay on 29-30 November 1974, under the joint auspices of the Indian Association of Leprologists and the Acworth Leprosy Hospital Society for Research, Rehabilitation and Education in Leprosy. Mr. B. K. Boman Behram, Mayor of Bombay, inaugurated the seminar.

The first day's proceedings centered around the main theme of the seminar, "Urban Leprosy Control." It was unique in that the leading experts in the field for the first time assembled to discuss leprosy essentially as a problem affecting the cities and the venue for their deliberation was the "Urbs prima in Indis" where the disease is rampant.

Several interesting papers relating to case detection, case holding, health education, social aspects and rehabilitation with special reference to urban conditions were presented. It was felt that: 1) the high prevalence revealed through surveys of slums and school populations, 2) the alarming rate of dropouts especially of infectious cases, 3) increasing debilitation of patients working in industries, 4) the problem posed by beggars, and 5) the ignorance prevailing in urban society about the facts of leprosy, etc., called for specific guidelines giving priority

for urban leprosy work. A panel of experts was formed at the seminar to recommend such guidelines after the problem had been studied in detail.

On the second day, the clinical, therapeutic and laboratory aspects of leprosy were discussed. There was a guest lecture on "Modern Concepts on Classification of Leprosy" by Dr. D. S. Ridley, Pathologist, Hospital for Tropical Diseases, London. The seminar concluded after a panel discussion by experts in the field for the benefit of general practitioners and medical students. Dr. C. K. Job was the moderator for this discussion.

Over 160 delegates from India and several countries abroad participated in the seminar. A souvenir and brochure containing several articles of interest were published in commemoration of the seminar. The brochure also contains abstracts of the papers presented and an account of the proceedings of the symposium held on 28 February 1973 by the Acworth Leprosy Hospital Society for Research, Rehabilitation and Education in Leprosy, to mark the centenary of the discovery of *Mycobacterium leprae*.—R. Ganapati.

**Malawi.** *LEPRA-Leprosy Control Program, Annual Report 1973.* The year 1973 was the eighth year of the comprehensive leprosy control project organized by LEPRA in Malawi with Dr. B. D. Molesworth as director. Dr. Molesworth has submitted an annual report on the whole approach to leprosy work in Malawi and the various projects implemented. The report is broken down into the following sections: general, project area, northern region, central region, Balaka, Likwenu, and lower shire, and a statistical report on total leprosy cases registered and related data. [For a more detailed presentation of this report consult *Leprosy Review*.]—(*Adapted from Lepr. Rev.* 45 [1974] 334-336)

**Mexico.** *First Anglo-Mexican Meeting of Leprology.* Organized by the Mexican Association Against Leprosy and held at the Centro Dermatologico Pascua in Mexico City on 29 August 1974.

Many dermato-leprologists, nurses and social workers from all over Mexico attended the meeting which was considered as the first step towards organizing the next inter-

national leprosy congress, which is scheduled for Mexico City on 11-16 November is: Prof. Fernando Latapi, Chairman; Dr. Amado Saul, Co-Chairman; Dra. Obdulia Rodriguez, Secretary; Dr. Mario Gomez Vidal, Prosecretary; and Dr. Leonardo Zamudio, Treasurer.

Dr. S. G. Browne, Secretary-Treasurer, ILA, came to Mexico to discuss with Mexican leprologists and health authorities the organization of the congress.

The program was as follows:

1. Prof. F. Latapi, President, Mexican Association Against Leprosy, introduced Dr. Browne.

2. Case presentations. Several leprosy cases, children included, especially cases with Lucio's phenomenon, were presented by Drs. A. Saul and E. Castro with comments by Luisa Aglitia, social worker of the clinic. All cases were discussed in detail.

3. Dr. Browne's conference on leprosy today. He referred to the actual status of the knowledge of leprosy, the role of new approaches to the solution of the big problems which exist in the treatment and control of leprosy patients, and the future of modern campaigns against leprosy worldwide.

4. Dra. Obdulia Rodriguez, Histopathologist, Centro Pascua, discussed the role of histopathologic studies in the diagnosis of leprosy, classification of cases and treatment controls. She stressed that these studies are very useful and valuable not only for outpatient clinics but also for the mobile units which are being utilized around the country.  
—Amado Saul

**New Zealand.** *Leprosy seminars in the South Pacific.* Thanks to the initiative of the Lepers' Trust Board of New Zealand, Dr. S. G. Browne recently conducted seminars in Western Samoa, Tonga and Fiji. Doctors from distant islands were brought by air to the centers. In addition to the lectures, clinical demonstrations and visits to outlying hospitals, useful contacts were made with health departments and the general public through radio broadcasting and public meetings.

People in New Zealand can be proud of the continuing contribution they are making, through this voluntary agency, towards the effective control of leprosy in the South Pacific islands.—S. G. Browne

**Spain.** *Two leprosy courses to be held in Fontilles.* XIII Curso Internacional de Leprologia Para Medicos y XVI Curso Internacional de Leprologia Para Misioneros y Auxiliares Sanitarios, organizado por el Sanatorio San Francisco de Borja de Fontilles y patrocinado por la Soberana Orden Militar de Malta, con la colaboración de la Direccion General de Sanidad y profesores de dermatología de las facultades de medicina. El XIII curso tendrá lugar en el Sanatorio de Fontilles del 1 al 11 de octubre de 1.975, y el XVI curso tendrá lugar en el Sanatorio de Fontilles del 20 de octubre al 15 de noviembre 1.975, bajo la dirección del Director del Sanatorio, Dr. Jose Terencio de las Aguas.

**U.S.A.** *Aloha, Ira Hirschy!* A career of 38 years, of which the first 5 and the past 23 were wholly devoted to leprosy and the 10 in between were partly so directed, came to a close last December with the retirement of Ira D. Hirschy, M.D., from the post of chief of Communicable Disease Division of the Hawaii State Department of Health.

Born in Indiana, raised in North Dakota, schooled in zoology and then in medicine at the University of Michigan, where he received his MD in 1933, Dr. Hirschy interned in the Canal Zone and then at Queen's Hospital, and became physician in charge at Kalaupapa Settlement in 1936. He remained at that post until relieved by Norman Sloan in 1941.

He then spent four years in the Army, much of it in India, two more with UNRRA in China, and three with SCAP in Japan, before returning to Hawaii in 1951 to become chief of the leprosy program.

In 1961, after ten years in this position, he became chief of the communicable disease division, but leprosy remained, of course, his principal area of interest.

Dr. Hirschy saw leprosy in Hawaii change from an endemic disease, with over 40 new cases a year locally acquired, to an imported one, with the same number of total cases but nearly all brought in from outside the state; and he saw it change from a life-ruining disease for which isolation was obligatory and treatment ineffective, to one which could be controlled almost always, and finally one which no longer required isolation. One of his last official acts was to announce that continued sojourn in Kalaupapa

Settlement and Hale Mohalu Hospital was a voluntary matter for those patients still there.

It was his duty as medical officer in charge to resist efforts to eliminate isolation until there was proof that it was no longer neces-

sary, and he did resist them; he finally took the decisive step of eliminating isolation completely for all time. With his retirement, an era draws to a welcome close.—H. L. Arnold (*Adapted from Hawaii Med. J.* 34 [1975] 62)