

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.

England. *Dr. R. J. W. Rees receives honor.* The Queen's New Year Honors List for 1979 includes Dr. R. J. W. Rees of the National Institute for Medical Research, who was made a Companion of St. Michael and St. George.

Ethiopia. *New Director appointed for ALERT.* The All Africa Leprosy and Rehabilitation Training Center in Addis Ababa announced the retirement of Mr. Onni Niskanen, the executive director, on 31 March 1979, and the appointment of Mr. Bernt Johannessen as the new executive director. Mr. Niskanen had been executive director of ALERT since its foundation and had been instrumental in its growth into a research and training center of international stature through his outstanding management and dedication to obtaining adequate funding. Mr. Niskanen will continue to work for RED BARNA, the Norwegian Save the Children Federation. — (*Information provided by Dr. Paul Brand, Carville, La.*)

Germany. *The German Leprosy Relief Association (GLRA) joined in celebration of World Leprosy Day on 28 January 1979 and in participation in the International Year of the Child, by employing the motto "leprosy doesn't even spare children" in its campaign to provide the public with information about leprosy.* The GLRA wants people to realize that of the estimated 15-20 million persons worldwide suffering from leprosy that 3-5 million are children. Together with ILEP, of which it was a founding member, it is making available numerous audiovisual aids explaining the problem of leprosy in children.

The GLRA announces that it is setting up a second regional secretariat in Calcutta, India through the supervision of Mr. Gershon, the GLRA and Emmaus/Bern representative in India. The secretariat will control, supervise

and account for donations in the northern federal states of India.

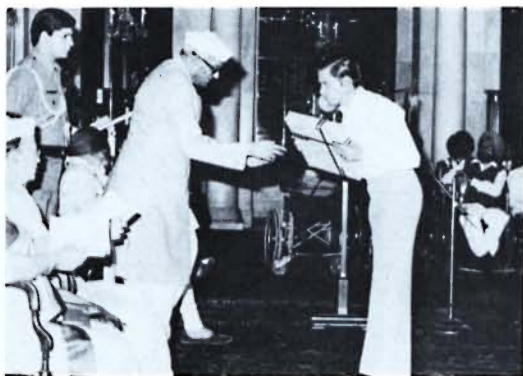
The GLRA presently provides financial support for 43 German doctors, nurses, craftsmen, farmers and social workers in leprosy centers in Asia, Africa and Latin America as well as funds for the employment and education of numerous local leprosy workers in these centers. It is associated with the working association for development aid, AGEH, which is the second largest development service in the Federal Republic.

The Borstel Research Institute, near Hamburg, announced that it would continue leprosy research despite the retirement of the eminent leprologist Prof. Dr. Enno Freerksen in September of 1978. A committee headed by Professor Meissner has been appointed by the Board of Trustees to handle leprosy research.

The GLRA has helped support the publication of the brochure "A Practical Guide to the Diagnosis and Treatment of Leprosy in the Basic Health Unit," by Drs. H. W. Wheate and J. M. H. Pearson. The brochure is a publication of ALERT (the All Africa Leprosy Rehabilitation and Training Center), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and is intended for use by medical auxiliary and nursing personnel. — (*Adapted from Heilen und Helfen, Deutsches Aussätzigen-Hilfswerke [DAHW]*)

India. *Leprosy patient receives distinguished award.* The Government of India presented its "National Award to the Most Efficient Physically Handicapped Employee — 1979" posthumously to Mr. J. G. Datar. This marked the first occasion when this distinguished award was given to a leprosy patient. Mr. Datar, with the aid of the staff at the Dr. Bandorawalla Hospital under the support of the Poona District Leprosy Committee, developed a poultry farm as well as a soap and disinfectant department at the hospital. He also aided numerous other exleprosy

patients to rehabilitate themselves in these areas. — (*Adapted from* information provided by Dr. J. M. Mehta, Hon. President, Poona Dist. Lepr. Comm.)



Mr. Shrikrisna Datar, receiving the "National Award to the Most Efficient Physically Handicapped Employee — 1979," posthumously presented to his father, Mr. J. G. Datar.

The Schieffelin Leprosy Research Center holds courses on ophthalmology in leprosy. The Schieffelin Leprosy Research Center, located in Karigiri, presented two courses on the subject of ophthalmology in leprosy taught by Dr. Margaret Brand (USPHS Hospital, Carville, La.). Dr. Brand was supported by the Christoffel Blinden Mission and the Schieffelin Center. The first course, held on 12-16 March 1979, was for general physicians already engaged in the care of leprosy patients; and the second course, held on 17 March 1979, was for heads of departments of ophthalmology in medical schools.

Philippines. *New director of Health Services Development and Planning appointed.* Dr. Francisco J. Dy, WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific, has appointed Dr. Remigio Mercado (Philippines) to the post of director of Health Services Development and Planning in WHO's Western Pacific Regional Office in Manila in the place of Dr. G. J. A. Ferrand (France) who resigned from the organization.

Dr. Mercado joined WHO in 1977 as regional adviser on strengthening of health services. In his new appointment he will be responsible to the regional director for WHO activities in health services development,

country health programming, nursing, health of the working population, drug policies and management, health legislation, health statistics, radiation health and the health information system. He will also be coordinator for WHO technical cooperation in the Philippines. — (*From* WHO Chronicle 32 [1978] 353)

Sierra Leone. *Leprosy statistics.* The number of leprosy clinics in Koinadugu District grew from 41 in 1973 to 156 in 1978; the number of patients grew from 1,005 to 2,001 and the number of new patients from 155 to 243. A total of 1,245 patients registered at the end of December 1978 have been declared inactive. It is a difficult district in which to set up a program because of poor roads, lack of communications, and a small population dispersed over a large area. Eight assistants and one supervisor hold the 156 clinics on a monthly or bimonthly basis using motorcycles, bicycles, or traveling by foot. The prevalence of leprosy is 12-13/1,000, and the incidence rate is 1.5/1,000, showing that leprosy is still a serious public health problem in the country. An assistant from the orthopedic center in Makeni provides footwear for patients with foot disabilities. — (*Adapted from* News & Views, W. Africa Secretariat, Occasional Paper No. 16)

Rev. Rocco Serra receives award. His Excellency Dr. Siaka Stevens, President, Republic of Sierra Leone presented Rev. Serra, Administrative Director, Leprosy Program in Sierra Leone with the Award of Officer of the Order of Rokel (O.R.) for his long and devoted service. — (*Adapted from* News & Views, W. Africa Secretariat, Occasional Paper No. 16)

Singapore. *Leprosy Statistics.* Ninety new cases of leprosy were registered in 1977, one-third of which had bacteriologically positive smears. Of 2,449 contacts screened, 19 (0.8%) also had leprosy. The distribution of the different forms of the disease was similar to previous years: lepromatous, 24.4%; borderline, 12.2%; tuberculoid, 58.9%; and indeterminate, 4.4%. Drugs for therapy are principally dapsone but also clofazimine, rifampin, ethionamide and thiambutosine; thalidomide is in

use on selected male patients with *erythema nodosum leprosum* reactions. — (Adapted from Wkly. Epidem. Rec. 53 [1979] 105-112)

South Pacific. *Leprosy control in the Western Pacific.* Recent leprosy prevalence surveys in countries of the South Pacific have shown the continuing seriousness of the leprosy problem and the inadequacy of some leprosy control services. Prevalence rates are estimated to range from less than 1 to 10 per 1,000 population. Because of late diagnosis and incorrect treatment the number of disabled is relatively high. The widespread and scattered population, and poor transport and communications are factors that increase the cost and impair the efficacy of control measures.

In the 1960s, WHO began by sending short-term consultants to assist the countries' leprosy control activities. In 1972 it started an inter-country project called "Leprosy Control Advisory Services" with the support of the New Zealand Lepers' Trust Board, which had a long record of assistance to governments and religious institutions in the care of leprosy patients all over the South Pacific. The inter-country project has since provided services to the Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides, American Samoa, Samoa, Tonga, the Gilbert Islands and Papua New Guinea. In 1976 its activities were strengthened with financial assistance from the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation, and they are now being extended to French Polynesia, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Guam, Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu and the Cook Islands. The intercountry project provides the best way for WHO to deliver services in these territories where the small population size would not justify the assignment of full-time staff. — (From WHO Chronicle 32 [1978] 351-352)

Spain. *Two leprosy courses to be held at Fontilles.* El XV curso internacional de leprología para médicos, organizado por el Sanatorio San Francisco de Borja de Fontilles y patrocinado por el Orden de Malta, con la colaboración de la Escuela Profesional de Dermatología de la U. de Valencia, Ministerio de Sanidad y Seguridad Social y Profesores de Dermatología de las Facultades de Medicina tendrá lugar en el Sanatorio de Fontilles desde el 28 de septiembre al 6 de octubre de 1979, dirigido por el Dr. J. Terencio de las Aguas,

Director Médico del Sanatorio. El XXII curso para misioneros y auxiliares sanitarios tendrá lugar desde 15 de octubre al 3 de noviembre de 1979.

Los aspirantes a este Curso deberán dirigir sus instancias al Comité Ejecutivo Internacional. 3 Place Claparede, GINEBRA (Suiza) antes del 30 de agosto de 1979 y al mismo tiempo al Sanatorio de San Francisco de Borja, Fontilles (Alicante, España). Para el XV curso se dará preferencia a los que trabajen en Centros Leprológicos, Universidades, o pertenezcan al Cuerpo de Dermatólogos Oficiales del Estado. Para el XXII curso se dará preferencia a los que trabajan en misiones. En segundo lugar a los que tengan el proyecto inmediato de trabajar en ellas y en centros leprológicos, siendo necesario presentar certificación del superior en este sentido.

La asistencia a este Curso es gratuita ya que los gastos de organización son costeados por la Orden de Malta. Los cursillistas deberán permanecer en régimen de internado en el Sanatorio de San Francisco de Borja.

La Orden de Malta concederá también varias becas para las pensiones de estancia en el Sanatorio, a los aspirantes que aleguen mejores méritos. Los médicos que no la obtuvieren deberán abonar 10.000 pesetas a la administración del Sanatorio por su estancia durante todo el Curso. Los misioneros y auxiliares sanitarios deberán abonar 12.000 pesetas.

Taiwan. *Nurse Majorie Bly and leprosy work in the Pescadores.* Miss Bly, who was born in Central China and trained in the USA, has spent more than 20 years in the Pescadores and has almost single-handedly eliminated the threat of leprosy for future generations there. During this period, always working in cooperation with the provincial health services, she has been the consistent stimulus that has almost eliminated the threat of leprosy for future generations of these islands. This has been done by persistent follow-up and treatment of all who have been found to have leprosy. Their homes have been visited on foot or by any available conveyance. There probably is no case of leprosy on these islands which has not received treatment — these islands which have during this period had the highest prevalence of leprosy in Taiwan. — (From ALM News Brief, April 1979 and Olaf K. Skinsnes)

U.S.A. Armadillos (or The Continuing Saga of GSRI). From Dr. Chapman H. Binford of the American Registry of Pathology, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, American Leprosy Missions received a letter from which the following is an excerpt:

The grant that ALM provided last year for the Chemotherapy Project using armadillos and the additional funds from the Damien Dutton Society and one private donor enabled Dr. Meyers [Dr. Wayne M. Meyers] to bring in a small group of armadillos to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in preparation for the chemotherapy program. The laboratory animal care unit of the AFIP gained much experience from this and became very enthusiastic about the armadillo as a model for biochemical research. This made it possible for Dr. Meyers, when the WHO IMMLEP (Immunology of Leprosy Scientific Working Group) project at the Gulf South Research Institute was being closed for lack of funds, to obtain approval of the AFIP Research Committee and the Director to propose to WHO that this project be transferred to the AFIP. As a result, WHO signed an agreement with the American Registry of Pathology to carry out this project at the AFIP and on December 8, 1978, through the courtesy of the Reserve Air Force, approximately 140 armadillos were transferred by air to the AFIP. This IMMLEP project is funded by WHO for the purpose of providing armadillo-grown *M. leprae* to be used by the WHO Committee in the hope of developing diagnostic procedures and ultimately a vaccine.

— (From ALM News Briefs, February 1979)

Drs. John Trautman and Daniel Riordan receive awards honoring their service and contributions to leprosy work. On December 2, 1978 the Southern Delegation of the Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem presented the Companionate of Merit in the Rank of Officer award to Dr. John R. Trautman, Director, USPHS Hospital, Carville, Louisiana and to Dr. Daniel Riordan during a formal investiture at the St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, Louisiana. Dr. Trautman was honored for his outstanding contributions to Hansen's disease control, and Dr. Riordan was honored for his service for over 30 years as a consultant in orthopedic surgery to the Carville hospital. The award is seldom given to nonmembers of the Order of St. Lazarus.

The Order of St. Lazarus, founded in 1098, is an ecumenical Christian fraternity which provides support for research, ambulance service, emergency and hospital care for victims of Hansen's disease as well as care for the ill and injured in general. It also helps support medical teams and the provision of pharmaceutical supplies for victims of natural disasters as well as providing support for geriatric care. — (*Adapted from Health Services World*, No. 60, April, 1979, p 3)