

NEWS ITEMS

Burning of the Aomori colony.—Damage totalling yen 450,000 was done by a fire which occurred in the Ishie Leper Colony, Aomori prefecture, on October 23, 1936. The flames spread rapidly, destroying twenty-three buildings in less than two hours; only a few buildings were spared. There were no casualties among the 582 inmates. The police are suspicious of the origin of the fire, concludes the report here quoted from the *Japan Weekly Chronicle*.

Insurrection at Nagashima.—A serious strike on the part of the inmates of the Aiseien leprosarium, on Nagashima Island, Okayama, was the subject of several news items in the *Japan Weekly Chronicle* of August 27th last, and of widespread publicity. It appears that about the middle of that month a large number of the inmates refused medical treatment, some going on hunger strike, and 700 of them repaired to Hikarigaoka Hill where they demonstrated. They demanded the removal of five of the officials, including the director, and a self-rule system. About 100 policemen and 350 fire-fighters were called in, it is stated, who attempted to pacify the strikers. Dr. Murata, the director of the Sotojima leprosarium, who visited Nagashima in connection with the strike, went up the hill to interview the lepers but was beaten up by them. Mediation by authorities of the prefecture and of the Home Office in Tokyo eased the situation and most of the strikers returned to their quarters, leaving only about 100 on the hill; the hunger strike was called off. One report states that, not in compliance with the strikers' demand but to assume responsibility for the affair, Dr. Mitsuda, the director, and Mr. Yotsuya, an official, tendered their resignations to the Home Office. It was said that the demand for self-rule might be granted, but the authorities had taken a strong attitude regarding that for the resignation of the officials. Fearing that the strike might spread to other leprosaria throughout the country, their directors were called together for an emergency conference. In view of the fact that there were some communists among the strikers the

Home Office was regarding the situation seriously, and it was decided to arrest all inmates guilty of violence. As a means of pacification it was decided to increase the accommodations at Nagashima at a cost of yen 300,000 (despite the fact that it had provisions for only 890 persons there were actually about 1,250 inmates). No information is available to us regarding later developments.

Discontent in the Philippines.—In June, last year, newspapers in Manila made much of an announcement credited to President Quezon that the Culion colony would be abandoned as unsuitable for humane segregation of lepers, and that new regional leprosaria would be built to take care of the patients from there and new cases that are taken up from time to time. No more patients were to be sent to Culion. That policy was followed for the rest of the year, with the result that the existing regional stations became badly overcrowded; the one in Cebu, with a bed capacity for 780, had 800 in September. Steps were inaugurated to increase the number of leprosaria in the provinces, but realization of the time required to build and prepare them for operation—after sites should be selected and protests of the inhabitants of the neighborhood overcome—and the money that it would take to provide in this way for the entire leper population, proved discouraging. After six months a site had not been secured for the first one to be built, to take care of the provinces around Manila. In the meantime those most concerned were highly unsettled by the hopes aroused and the lack of their immediate realization. At dawn, one day in October, 300 inmates of the leper department of San Lazaro hospital, in Manila, brushed aside their guards and marched on the palace of the President, to demand release from confinement, claiming that recent investigations had shown that the disease is not transmitted by contact. They were persuaded to return to the hospital, and later 26 of the leaders were “banished” to Culion in punishment. This incident received world-wide publicity. At the end of the same month Manila papers carried a statement that the situation at Culion was well in hand; a number of soldiers from the nearest post had been sent there. A request of the administrator for tear bombs and riot guns was denied. Late in the year the President announced that the colony is not to be abandoned, but will continue to be the place for the confinement of advanced cases and of the several thousands of patients there now. It is understood that transfer of selected cases from the regional stations, as in the past, is to be resumed.

Site acquired at Kongmoon.—Deeds have been passed by which the leper hospital at Kongmoon, South China, has been granted a site of 200 acres. The hospital was founded two years ago, and is conducted by the Maryknoll Missionaries.

Sterilization of Siamese lepers disapproved.—A certain official proposed to the Ministry of Interior of the Government of Siam, according to the *Siam Chronicle*, that all persons afflicted with leprosy should be sterilized “in order to cut from its roots the dreaded disease which is considered by some to be hereditary.” The Department of Public Health, after due deliberation, announced that this procedure was not considered necessary and would involve a great expenditure in obtaining the required doctors and instruments. The Department has drawn up a scheme for the suppression of the disease which they believe will be effective and will not involve great expenditures, and which will be applied as soon as authority is granted.

New hospital building at Dichpali.—The foundation of a new men’s hospital building has been laid at the Dichpali leprosarium in Hyderabad, South India. Of the estimated cost of Rs 60,000, the Nizam’s government had promised to provide Rs 25,000. Started with 20 patients in 1917, the institution had 700 in 1935, and in spite of the discharge of 425 patients “symptom free” that year only one out of three

who had applied could be admitted. It was estimated that there are 120,000 cases in the state.

Leprosy board in Cochin.—The Cochin government has constituted a medical board for the Adoor Leper Hospital in order to certify cured cases. The Board is to consist of Dr. D. Raghavendra Rao, who is the chief medical officer, the medical officer of the leper hospital, and the state medical officer in charge of leprosy relief work.

Pipe collecting for lepers.—Perhaps the queerest collection ever undertaken was made recently by Toc H when it set out to get pipes for lepers in Ceylon who could not smoke cigarettes. As a result of an appeal two thousand pipes were shipped out from England.

Tabriz hospital, Iran.—The Iranian government has completed a hospital in the province of Tabriz for the care of lepers in that region, according to a letter from Dr. H. A. Lichtwardt. Dr. Wilder P. Ellis, of the American Hospital in Tabriz, will be in charge of the medical work there.

A translation of Rogers and Muir.—The Center for the Study and Prophylaxis of Leprosy of the State of Minas Geraes, states the *Revista Brasileira de Leprologia*, through the intermediation of its librarian, Sr. Hamilton Palermo, will publish an authorized translation of the book *Leprosy*, by Rogers and Muir.

The International Center, Brazil.—A conference or "reunion" at the International Center of Leprology at Rio de Janeiro has been planned, according to a note in *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires). A despatch from Geneva in the same newspaper quoted the last report to the League of Nations from Professor Rabello, head of the International center, as saying that arrangements had been made to supply antileprosy drugs to the leprosaria of Argentina, Uruguay and Colombia, and that information had been supplied the last-named country for use in planning an extension of its antileprosy work.

Personals.—DR. VICTOR G. HEISER is reported to have sailed from New York on a world tour, in the course of which he will visit Cairo, where a general leprosy conference will be held next year.

DR. JAMES L. MAXWELL, lately of the Henry Lester Institute of Medical Research, has accepted the post of director of the Institute of Hospital Technology, in Hankow, on a basis that will permit him to continue his activities in connection with leprosy and other endemic diseases in China.

DR. E. MUIR visited the United States last November to attend meetings of the American Academy of Tropical Medicine, to visit the Carville leprosarium, and to discuss plans for the congress of the International Leprosy Association.

DR. JOHN REENSTIERNA, of the Department of Hygiene and Bacteriology, University of Upsala, Sweden, has recently gone abroad for a second time on an official mission in order to continue his work on the testing of his antileprosy serum.

DR. ISAAC SANTRA, who for some years has been in charge of field survey work under the leprosy department of the School of Tropical Medicine, Calcutta, has accepted the post of leprosy expert with the Nigerian Government.

DRS. JOHN LOWE, of Calcutta, R. G. COCHRANE, of Chingleput, and H. W. WADE, of Cullion, are meeting on invitation of the government of Malaya with DR. G. A. RYRJE at the Sungei Buloh Settlement, Kuala Lumpur, to discuss informally some of the problems of leprosy met with in that region.