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EDITORIALS

Editorials are written by members of the Editorial Board, and opinions expressed are those of the writers. Any statement that meets with disagreement will be of service if it but stimulates discussion.

THE JOURNAL AND THE FUTURE

In 1900, under arrangements initiated at the Berlin conference, publication of *Leprosy, Bibliotheca Internationalis*, was begun. With three gaps (1901, 1907 and 1911), partially compensated by the three volumes issued in 1910, on account of the Bergen conference, publication was continued until 1915, when the periodical became a casualty of the World War.

Eighteen years later, as a result of the formation of the International Leprosy Association in Manila two years previously, THE JOURNAL began publication in 1933. Now, after seven annual volumes have appeared, Europe is again immersed in a war the effects of which reach to the farthest parts of the world. Naturally the question arises whether or not this periodical will suffer the same fate as its predecessor.

The present circumstances are very different from those under which *Leprosy* was published. Though its principal editor, Professor Ehlers, was of a neutral country, and though the printing could have been transferred from Germany where it had always been done, the disturbance was too widespread and the editorial organization as a whole was too seriously affected for such an enterprise to be continued; doubtless, too, financial support was withdrawn. Furthermore, leprosy work at that time

was so little developed in the regions in which the disease prevailed that the publication of special material regarding it was drastically curtailed.

With regard to the future, no one can speak with any certainty. Anything written today may be negated tomorrow. At the moment, however, certain things may be anticipated. First, it would be but blind optimism to hope that the International Leprosy Association will not suffer; too many of its members are of the countries that are now involved in the present struggle. Reduction of membership in the Association will involve lessening of financial support from that source and reduce the distribution of the periodical. On the other hand, in the absence of a radical change in the present situation its principal financial backer, the Leonard Wood Memorial, should be able to continue its subsidy and hence cessation of publication should not be necessary on that account.

With regard to material for publication, the situation seems less favorable. Though many of the men in the British and French empires who are working in leprosy are past the age for direct war service (many had their part in the previous war), and though the work of others may be considered essential so that they will remain at their posts, the work as a whole may well be affected because of increase of responsibilities due to withdrawal of other men from the regions in which they work or because of shrinkage of income. Leprosy work, however, has on the whole developed to a point where it is unthinkable that it should be discontinued except in the event of absolute catastrophe, and in many regions not immediately concerned such activities will presumably be pursued without interruption.

There seems to be no reason, therefore, to anticipate that the study of leprosy will be curtailed to anything like the extent that is reflected by the paucity of abstracts that appeared in *Tropical Diseases Bulletin* for several years after 1914. THE JOURNAL may become thin, but it is not expected to succumb to starvation. At the same time the outlook is such that we are impelled to invite the attention of our collaborators everywhere to the requirements as regards material for a periodical such as ours.

--H. W. W.