

## LEPROSY NEWS AND NOTES

*Information concerning institutions, organizations and individuals connected with leprosy work, scientific or other meetings, legislative enactments, and other matters of interest.*

### THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF LEPROLOGY<sup>1</sup>

In 1931, the Brazilian Government placed at the disposal of the League of Nations an International Centre for Research on Leprosy, established at Rio de Janeiro. The object of the Centre was to undertake any work which might contribute towards the prevention of leprosy by means of epidemiological, clinical and biological research, with special reference to treatment. The Centre was therefore instructed to promote international co-operation by organizing a specialized course of instruction open to doctors and hygienists of countries desiring to take advantage of these facilities. The Research Centre was inaugurated on June 12th, 1934. Its efforts have been concentrated on epidemiology, chemistry and pharmaceuticals, treatment and diagnosis, bacteriology and immunology.

In pursuance of agreements concluded with a number of Brazilian States, the Centre has carried out studies on the incidence of leprosy, with the particular object of determining the relationship between endemicity and the geographical and climate conditions, housing and standard of living of lepers. The data collected in this manner are now being collated and will be published in a general report. More elaborate epidemiological studies are still being carried out in northern districts of the State of Rio de Janeiro, which possesses a network of institutions for combating the disease and for isolating cases showing open lesions.

In 1935, the League of Nations sent a specialist in chemotherapy, Dr. H. I. Cole—former chemist to the Culion Leper Colony in the Philippines—to the Centre. Under his direction, the Chemistry and Pharmaceutics Section undertook the manufacture of specific remedies for the purposes of the Centre's

<sup>1</sup>This statement has been taken verbatim from a report on the work of the Health Organization of the League of Nations between June, 1938, and April, 1939, and on its 1939 program, in the *Bulletin* of that organization 8 (1939) Nos. 1 and 2.

therapeutic research and for supplying the various institutions and countries collaborating with the Centre. During 1938, 864 litres of remedial preparations for use in the treatment of leprosy were supplied in this way; they included iodized ethyl esters, creosoted ethyl esters, and purified *Hydnocarpus Wightiana* oil.

The same Section has also proceeded with investigations primarily designed to increase the therapeutic action of chaulmoogra remedies and to utilize Brazilian chaulmoogras. Dr. Cole and his colleagues have succeeded in isolating in a pure state two new homologues recognized as active principles of chaulmoogra acid—namely, the aleptic and aleprylic acids. A third, aleprestic acid, has now been purified up to 75%. In addition to the above three homologues, Dr. Cole has also succeeded in extracting chaulmoogric, hydnocarpic, gorlic, oleic and palmatic acids from the *Hydnocarpus Wightiana* oil.

Research into diagnosis and treatment has been carried out at the Curupaity Leper Colony and in the dispensaries of the Ministry of Public Health. The use of lepromine and lepronine, the dosage of chaulmoogra derivatives, and the influence of diet—particularly of large doses of pure vitamin A—on the course of the leprous infection have been investigated. Professor Ozorio de Almeida has continued to work on a method of treatment using oxygen under pressure on patients previously sensitized with small doses of methylene blue. The results were laid before the Cairo Congress, after which Dr. Wade, Medical Director of the American Leprosy Foundation, proceeded to Rio de Janeiro to investigate the method; this will probably be tried out at the Carville Leper Colony in the United States. The Centre has also done some work on leprosy in rats, the Witebsky test, lepromines and the lepromatous antigen.

The Centre's laboratories have been thrown open to young workers. An annual course of leprology has been organized in conjunction with the Faculty of Medicine, the Oswaldo Cruz Institute and the Public Health Department; it was attended by twenty-one doctors in 1938. Finally, a Review of Leprology, including contributions from foreign collaborators, is now published under the auspices of the Centre.

#### CLOSURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER

On June 12th, 1939, this center was closed by termination of the contract with the League of Nations, and the materials

and funds belonging to the center were distributed to six Brazilian institutions where leprosy is being studied. The major part of the money was assigned to the *Revista Brasileira de Leprologia*.

—H. C. DE SOUZA-ARAÚJO

#### LEPROSY COURSE IN BUENOS AIRES

Details of a special course on leprosy, to be given in the department of dermatology of the medical school at Buenos Aires, were published in the *Revista Argentina de Dermatología* 23 (1939) 166-169. This course was being offered because of the establishment of new hospital-colonies in the country. The project was announced formally in a letter addressed by Professor Baliña to the dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, dated January 1, 1939, which is reproduced (translated) in part:

The approaching habilitation of hospital-colonies and dispensaries for leprosy patients will entail the creation of positions which should be filled by physicians who possess special knowledge of the disease. It must be confessed, however, that the requirements are such that the work attracts very few physicians. There exists the paradoxical situation that, though there is a plethora of professionals in the country and a serious sanitary problem, there are not enough physicians suitably prepared to take part in the antileprosy campaign.

For this reason the undersigned has resolved to intensify during the new scholastic year the teaching of leprosy in the department under his charge. To this end he is now disposed to announce this proposition in the medical periodicals. It will be made known at the same time that medical graduates who desire to dedicate themselves to this study will find the same facilities to improve their theoretical-practical knowledge of dermatology and syphilology; especially with regard to the features in which these matters are of special interest in relation to leprosy.

The instructors announced were, besides Professor Baliña, Dr. G. Basombrio, chief of clinic, Dr. P. Bosq, in charge of pathological anatomy, and Srta. Dolia Lóizaga de Gambarini, laboratory assistant. Dr. José M. M. Fernandez, assistant professor of dermatology of the Faculty of Medicine of Rosario, would also participate.

The course, of which the full schedule is given, is described as covering both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject, to be given in the clinic and the laboratory. Because of the expectation that the physicians who would take the course would have to deal with leprosy patients, considerable attention was given the matter of diagnosis of the disease and its differen-

tiation from other conditions, dermatological or otherwise, with which it may be confounded. Emphasis was also laid on the classification of the clinical forms of leprosy, a matter of prime importance and a basis for prognosis, prophylaxis and treatment of the disease. In the last decade leprology has made or consolidated important acquisitions, which were to be dealt with.

Sessions were to be held at the Ramos Mejia Hospital in the mornings to ten o'clock, except on Thursdays; Tuesdays and Saturdays to be devoted to theoretical work and the study of cases and clinical records, Wednesdays to special outside consultation work, Mondays and Fridays to investigation and practical work in the laboratory. One Sunday was to be devoted to visits to the General Rodriguez hospital-colony, which when completed will accommodate 500 patients. The fee charged graduates who took courses of this category was to be \$50.00, national currency, which money was to be used to buy books for the university library.

*Addendum.*—Subsequent to the preparation of this note, Dr. Basombrio has informed us that the course was given as planned, from August 16 to September 30, 1939. Thirty-three physicians from nearly all parts of the country attended, thus increasing materially the number of medical men prepared to take up the campaign against leprosy in hospitals, clinics and laboratories.

#### JAPANESE LEPROSY ASSOCIATION

The twelfth Japanese leprosy conference was held in Aomori, at the northernmost of the prefectual leprosaria, on August 6th and 7th, 1939. Over one hundred papers were read, among which the following drew special attention:

Destruction of leprosy bacilli under ultra-supersonic and super-short wave radiation. T. INOUE (Keiaien).

Tissue culture of spleen of an embryo born of a leprosy mother, with leprosy bacilli. KIN (Koseien).

Cultivation of acid-fast bacilli from the nose and throat of lepers. T. ICHIHARA (Koseien).

Ten years' observation of 54 cases in which the Mitsuda reaction had features of interest. M. IGARASHI (Zensei).

The Schick reaction in leprosy. H. KITANO (Keiaien).

Diaplacental infection in rat leprosy. N. NONAKA (Kitasato Institute).

After the conference Dr. Mitsuda was installed as an official under appointment by the Emperor, the first time that this honor

has been extended to a leprosy worker. At the same time a farewell meeting was held with Mrs. Oltmans, who was returning to the United States after the death of her husband.

—F. HAYASHI

In an abstract supplement of *La Lepro* for 1938, a reprint of 128 pages issued a few months ago, are the transactions of the 10th and 11th meetings of this association. The 10th meeting was held in Takamatsu, on November 15th and 16th, 1937. Besides a special address by Dr. Kensuke Mitsuda entitled "Demonstration von Lepragewebe," a full summary of which is given, there are 98 titles. With 83 of these there are abstracts, some very brief and others of considerable length, sometimes with tables; 66 are in German and 17 in English. The 11th meeting was held in Kyoto on April 2, 1938, in combination with the 38th meeting of the Japanese Dermatological Association. Only 15 papers are listed, 10 of them with abstracts, of which 8 are in German, the other 2 in English.

In *La Lepro* during 1938 there were also published 27 original articles. Abstracts of them, in Europe languages (12 in English, 14 in German) or in Esperanto (1 abstract) also appear in this reprint. It will not be possible to record all of this abundant material in the current literature section of THE JOURNAL, though much of it will be noticed, beginning with this issue. Inquiries concerning the availability of the reprint may be addressed to the editor of *La Lepro*, Prof. Yakichi Satani, at the Osaka Dermatological Institute, Osaka Imperial University, Osaka, Japan.—EDITOR.

#### THE SIXTH PACIFIC SCIENCE CONGRESS

No official or other comprehensive report on the proceedings of the Sixth Pacific Science Congress, held in San Francisco late in July, has been received by THE JOURNAL but it is known that several men in different parts of the region involved were invited to send papers on the subject of the epidemiology of leprosy. A report by the United Press, summarized below, indicates that other phases of the matter were also dealt with.

The common house fly now stands incriminated as a carrier of leprosy, according to a report presented by Dr. E. Marchoux, of the Institut Pasteur of Paris. In this respect the fly stands by itself in the insect field, the only one which carries the germ of this disease. However, conditions generally must be favorable before the fly can transmit leprosy. Matters of environment, hygiene, climate and other factors enter into the picture. This bacillus would be far more dangerous than that of tuberculosis if it were spread as easily. Only a few of them, properly placed, can spread the disease, and their multiplication in the body is exceedingly slow.

Leprosy can kill its own germs as well as its host victims, according to the findings of many scientists tested from many angles by Dr. Malcolm H. Soule, of the Hygienic Laboratory of the University of Michigan. That is why the infection cannot be transferred successfully to laboratory animals, which if it could be done would permit intimate laboratory study of the disease.

No positive multiplication occurred in any animal inoculated in a series of tests made with human leprous tissue taken from many patients. All other efforts to get the disease out into the open where it might be examined critically and exhaustively while the causative organism is still active appear to have ended in failure.

Tuberculoid leprosy appears to be a new form of the disease, having been recognized first in 1930, according to a paper presented by Dr. J. Tisseuil, leprosy authority of the French Soudan. He gave a full description of this new type of the disease.

#### IMPROVEMENTS AT MANANKAVALY

Improvements that have been effected at the Manankavaly leprosarium, the most important one in Madagascar, were reported recently by the "La Presse-Associée." This hospital-hospice is now a model one which speaks eloquently of the admirable efforts that have been made by the French colonial authorities to combat the disease. This institution, in which there are a thousand inmates, has been transformed and modernized, and it constitutes for the new service an indispensable center for treatment and study.

In a large building, of modern construction, are grouped the general and medical services, with examining, treatment and delivery rooms, baths, etc. A store room, a butchery and a granary for rice will complete the new facilities. A water system supplies the village and its annexes. Around this center three large farms have been constructed, with buildings for cattle, sheep, hogs and fowl which are raised by the patients. An agent of the agricultural service goes to the place weekly to distribute plants and seeds. At the same time facilities for entertainment—theatre, cinema, games—have been increased.

The protection of children plays an important part in the organization of the leprosarium. The thirty or so babies born each year are removed immediately to a clean nursery, located in a special quarter. At the age of seven years they are transferred to other charitable institutions or to native families able to keep and educate them.

An interesting note on the early days of this colony appears in *Le Christianisme*, of Paris. Some time before 1900 an English missionary, Rev. Peake, had established a small leprosarium with 130 patients, who were left almost to themselves under the more or less conscientious surveillance of a native. General Galliéni, governor of Madagascar, who wished to make the internment of lepers obligatory, bought the place (for 10,000 francs) and arranged to have two deaconess-nurses sent there from France; because the number of inmates had increased rapidly to more than 200, a third one was sent out at the end of 1902. In 1905 the antireligious campaign, following the separa-



tion of Church and State, struck Manankavaly. A new Governor-general, determined to "deliver the Malgaches from the bondage of the missions," ignored the mission organization and dealt directly with the deaconesses themselves. Being required to abandon their costume or leave, one chose the latter course while the others remained with their charges. Twenty years after their arrival in 1900, the institution had increased to a capacity of 1,850 inmates.

#### NEWS ITEMS

*Preventoria in Brazil.*—The President of the Republic of Brazil, Doctor Getulio Vargas, gave to the Federação das Sociedades de Assistência aos Lazaros the large sum of one thousand contos de reis for the equipment of seven new preventoria for healthy children of leprous parents to be inaugurated soon in the states of Espirito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Santa Catharina, Pará, Rio Grande do Sul, Ceará and Maranhão. —H. C. DE SOUZA-ARAÚJO

*Courses of leprosy in Brazil.*—The third course of leprosy at the Universidade do Brasil, which was completed on November 28th, 1938, was attended by fifteen medical men who received diplomas. A gold medal was conferred upon Dr. Nilson Carvalho Silva, delegate of Pará, classified in first place, and silver medals were given to Drs. Joaquim Martins Ferreira, Jr. and Albino de Almeida Cardozo, both classified in second place. In the latter part of 1939, in the School of Medical Science of Rio de Janeiro, Dr. H. C. de Souza-Araujo gave his annual four-month course to 47 students of the school and three from elsewhere. —H. C. DE S.-A.

*Conference of Social Workers.*—A conference of social workers concerned with lepers was scheduled to be held in Rio de Janeiro last November, by the Federação das Sociedades de Assistência aos Lazaros of Brazil, which now number 88, distributed throughout in Brazil. —H. C. DE S.-A.

*Special salaries for leprosy workers.*—By a decree promulgated on April 1st, 1939, the medical and attendant staffs of the Federal leprosaría of Brazil received the benefit of a special increase of 30 percent of their salaries. This increase is intended to benefit only the personnel working daily in contact with lepers. —H. C. DE S.-A.

*Improvements in Colombian leprosaría.*—At Agua de Dios there has been built a station for disinfection, provided with an autoclave of large capacity, an air-tight chamber for formalin, and all necessary services. Approaching completion is the installation of a sewage system and other projects, for which the amount of \$90,000-00 (approximately \$50,000) was provided. At the Caño de Loro leprosarium a hospital for sick patients, new halls for treatment and disinfection, and a laboratory were inaugurated last October. At Contratación a building for consultations has been completed. —M. BERNAL LONDOÑO

*Chaulmoogra preparation in Colombia.*—The National Institute of Hygiene has completed the installation of a complete equipment for the vacuum distillation of chaulmoogra esters. —M. B. L.

*American Mission to Lepers.*—The annual meeting of this organization, held in New York City October 17 and 18th, 1939, was a significant example of cooperation in antileprosy work over a wide front. The body of missionary

doctors abroad was represented on the program by Arthur L. Piper, M.C., of Katanga, Belgian Congo, and Paul W. Harrison, M.D., of Arabia; the Church Committee for China Relief was represented by Mrs. Charles Kirkland Roys; and Mr. Perry Burgess, president of the Leonard Wood Memorial represented research. The Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Corporation loaned "The Great Heart," a short motion picture of the life of Father Damien; and Dr. Joseph Gevaert, Commissioner-General of the Government of Belgium to the New York World's Fair, presented an address expressing generous appreciation of the work of Protestant missions in the Belgian Congo.

—M. H. SOULE

*Violence at Valbonne.*—Late last May there appeared reports of an attack on three "journalists" who were visiting the Valbonne leprosarium, near Marseilles. It was stated that they went there on the invitation of General Viala, president of the organization which runs the colony, who wanted to make a press appeal for funds. On the second day of their visit, the report has it, they were set upon by 30 of the patients who dragged them from their car, tore their clothing and smashed their cameras, releasing them only upon intervention by Gen. Viala. The remainder of the visitors' program was abandoned, it is gravely recorded. *Le Petit Journal*, of Paris, which spoke of the affair as a "dramatic and strange incident, reminiscent of the horrible reprisals that the lepers of the Middle Ages exercised on the inhabitants of the towns," gave the names and professions of the persons attacked, one being on the editorial staff of a large fortnightly publication, one a man of letters and the third a photographic reporter. On the other hand *La Tribune Republicaine*, of Saint-Etienne, published an equally circumstantial account of very different tenor. According to it, the three men concerned were "se disant cinéastes" from Paris who had asked permission to accompany Gen. Viala on his visit to the leprosarium, to attend the celebration of Pentacost. There they took pictures, wrote a scenario, and made a film with the cooperation of a majority of the patients. It was a strict condition that they should photograph only such patients as might be willing to participate, but against advice they took pictures clandestinely of some who had refused. The next day M. Dormay, the administrator of the institution, tried to persuade them to hand over the negatives so made. After they had refused to do so three especially capable inmates, selected by the resentful thirty, informed the "messieurs" that they would regretfully be obliged to administer to them the correction that ordinarily is reserved for misbehaved children, but the application of "cette force brutale" was unnecessary; the plates were seized and the photographers were "seated gently upon the cushions of their car" and left. Which story is the correct one is not evident.

*A Spanish menace in France?*—Last April the *Cri de Lyon* inquired what had become of the lepers released from the Spanish leprosaria or dispersed among the population ravaged by the civil war. (The number was given as 15,000 to 20,000, whereas official estimates have been 2,000 for the whole country.) How many of them, it is asked, are among the Spanish refugees in France?

*The founding of the Gwagwada colony, in Nigeria.*—In connection with the departure of a young woman to join others at the Gwagwada leprosarium, in northern Nigeria, English newspapers state that two of these women founded



the colony in 1935, after having lived in the region for nine years. During their pioneer work they lived in grass huts, felled trees to make compounds, and shot animals for food and safety. During the first year they gave 3,500 injections. Twenty of their patients built houses at the site and settled there, since when the number of residents has increased to nearly 50.

*Children at Bunyonyi, Uganda.*—Of the children cared for at the C. M. S. Leper Island, in Lake Bunyonyi, Uganda, at least 37 were reported last year to be eligible for discharge, symptom free. Ten of them were school-children, but only one wanted to go. The parents of these children advanced numerous reasons why their children should not go back to live with their relatives, among them being the assertion that they would have no school to go to. The father of the one exception was not a leper and wanted his boy at home to look after his sheep. —J. W. LINDSAY

*The National Leprosarium of Shanghai.*—In a recent visit made by the general secretary of the Chinese Mission to Lepers, it was found that the buildings of the Shanghai national leprosarium, at Tazang, which were erected in 1935 at a cost of NCS100,000.00 (including the medical equipment) were still standing, but that the damage sustained was so great that an enormous sum would be required for repairs to reestablish the institution, which was reputed to be the finest of its kind in China. Not only was the furniture completely looted, but even the wooden floors of the main buildings and the cottages, and the bamboo fences around the campus were removed and used for fuel. The buildings have outlived the war, but they are nothing but empty shells.

*Pakhoi has the largest and most beautiful site among leprosaria in China.*—Purchased with a substantial donation given by the Chinese Mission to Lepers, the new leper settlement at Pakhoi, South China, has the most extensive, beautiful and well-chosen site among the institutions of its kind in China, according to the opinion of the Rev. T. C. Wu who has recently visited the settlement. Nearly 150 lepers, including 40 sent and supported by the government of Hongkong, are already there. The number will soon be augmented to 200 when the 40-odd female lepers, who are still in their old home, are removed to the settlement upon the completion of their new home. With sufficient funds, the settlement can easily take care of 1,000 people.

*Leprosy a major problem of Yunnan.*—Indicative of its prevalence and menace the Yunnan provincial government has singled out leprosy as one of the four principal problems to be tackled. In compliance with an order issued by the government some four years ago, a partially completed survey has been made reporting 6,384 people definitely suffering from leprosy. There are now already established 20 isolation camps, 45 more being prepared, and 1,472 cases segregated. Under the leadership of Dr. H. Y. Yao, the provincial health commissioner of Yunnan and a graduate of John Hopkins, preparation is now being made, with the financial backing of the Chinese Mission to Lepers, to organize antileprosy corps for rural districts where the disease is believed to have its strongholds.

*Kwangsi planning to build leprosaria.*—The well-known progressive government of Kwangsi had planned, with definite funds set aside, to build four large-scale leprosaria to be located in Wuchow, Liuchow, Nanning and Lungchow

to take care of its own lepers. Owing to the outbreak of hostilities, the plan is still a plan and the numerous cases of leprosy are roaming in countryside waiting to be isolated.

*Tsing Yuen leprosarium safe.*—"Although the Japanese had burnt down half the city of Tsing Yuen, the leper home has been unmolested," reported Mr. Warren J. Winter, the superintendent. "We have now 75 inmates and are hoping to increase the number to 100... I have been trying hard to get permission to start a leper home here in Hong Kong, but have not been able to make much headway."

*No interruption in Hunan.*—Dr. Margin Mortensen, of the Norwegian Missionary Society, has written encouragingly with reference to the Sinhwa Leprosarium. In 1938 12 new cases were admitted, two being refugees from Kiangsu and Hupeh. Four patients were discharged as arrested, 16 remaining at the end of the year (1938). So far work has been continued as usual, as there have been no bombing in Sinhwa recently.

*Casualties at the Swatow municipal leprosarium.*—On May 5 Japanese naval planes mercilessly attacked the municipal leprosarium of Swatow resulting in 24 dead and 29 wounded of its helpless inmates, and destruction of several buildings, according to a letter received by the Chinese Mission to Lepers from Dr. Lin Tsengyi, superintendent of the said leprosarium. We are totally at loss as to why the Japanese raiders should pick a leprosarium as their target.—[This and the preceding six items are from the *Lep. Quart.* 13 (1939).]

#### PERSONALS

DR. JOÃO BARROS BARRETO resigned, last June, from the position of general director of the National Department of Health of Brazil. —H. C. DE S.-A.

DR. HUMBERTO CARDOZO, chemist, has been nominated by the Minister of Health of Brazil to continue the work of Dr. H. I. Cole in the chemical section of the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz of Rio de Janeiro. —H. C. DE S.-A.

DR. R. C. GERMOND, for several years medical officer of the Botsabele Leper Asylum in Basutoland, has resigned that position and has been assigned to other duties. It is expected, however, that he will do further leprosy survey work in the future.

DR. JOHN LOWE, who was seriously ill in England last year, has returned to his post at the School of Tropical Medicine in Calcutta.

DR. H. C. DE SOUZA-ARAÚJO has had conferred upon him, by decree of the President of the Republic of Poland, Ignaci Moscicki, dated July 31st, 1938, the decoration of the National Order of Polonia Restituta (1918) with the degree of Official. Returning from Colombia Dr. Souza-Araujo visited all of the South American countries, including Trinidad and Panama, collecting data for a projected monograph on leprosy in South America. —H. C. DE S.-A.

MRS. EUNICE WEAVER returned to Rio de Janeiro from a long tour of the northern states of Brazil, where she organized many "Campanhas de Solidariedade" for the building of preventoria for healthy children of leprosy parents. Her activity was crowned with great success. —H. C. DE S.-A.