

THE MEDICOFILM SERVICE

The Army Medical Library, Washington, D. C., has invited us to publish an announcement of the establishment of the "Medicofilm Service," the purpose of which is to supply film repro-

⁵ See abstract in this issue, p. 144.

⁶ *Lep. in India* 12 (1940) 121-137.

ductions of medical literature in that library. It seems desirable to bring this matter more particularly to the attention of leprosy workers, since there is probably no other group of medical men who on the whole are so greatly handicapped by lack of reference facilities.

If, for physicians and other scientific workers in a country like the United States, the value of microfilm copying of scientific material is as great as the growth of such services during the past few years shows it to be, those facilities should be of no less value to physicians in the leprosy field elsewhere in the world. To be able to receive, at slight expense and in little more time than is required for transportation of the mails, actual photographic copies of articles and similar material for permanent possession is most helpful to isolated research workers.

PURPOSES AND PLAN OF OPERATION

The purpose of this service is to render the literature resources of the Army Medical Library available to research workers at a distance by copying articles upon microfilm. In this way it is possible, at relatively small expense, to build up collections of selected material from the world literature by persons who otherwise would not have access to it. In order to avoid any possible misunderstandings with regard to the question of copyright, Medicofilm Service emphasizes that it does microfilm copying for research workers only on the mutual agreement that the copies so made are in lieu of loan of the publication or manual transcript of the original text, and that they will be used only for the advancement of science.

Microfilms are strips of 35 mm. motion-picture films upon which printed pages are photographed in sequence. Because of the reduced size, they can be read only with the aid of an enlarger. These devices are of two kinds, small monocular hand viewers and larger projection readers.

For hand viewers, a magnification of five or more times is desirable, and a viewer costing \$2.00 has been devised by the Medicofilm Service. This is recommended as having several advantages for occasional reading over the projector, other than its low cost, but it is made in France and the stock cannot be renewed at present. It is a fact, however, that devices giving lower magnifications, such as the inexpensive film examiner familiar to users of miniature film cameras can be used, though somewhat less conveniently. A special projector has also been devised, which throws the image onto a hooded screen by means of a lens of photographic quality and a suitable condensing element illuminated by a 21 CP, 6-volt automobile headlight lamp with condenser. This costs \$25, but again the supply is limited because the optical parts are made in France. The Spencer Lens Co., of Buffalo, New York, is to offer a similar projector for \$32.

The Medicofilm Service is operated on a nonprofit basis, the only cost being for the actual material and labor. The price for films is 30 cents

per complete article not exceeding 30 pages in length, and 10 cents additional for each extra 10 pages or fraction thereof. Enlargements of microfilms on 6"×8" photographic paper will be made for 10 cents per print in addition to the charge for the original film.

Orders should be addressed to: Medicofilm Service, Army Medical Library, 7th St. & Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. For convenience, special order blanks are supplied on request. References should be complete and accurate; in case they are not, search will be made but the service may be delayed or prevented. The charges indicated are for articles available in the library, which receives upward of 4,000 medical periodicals, a list of which is supplied on request. Orders for articles not so available are transferred to another organization.

Regarding payment, it is stated in the original announcement that remittances may be made with the order, or in case it is expected to make repeated use of the service they may be made at convenient intervals. In response to an inquiry, however, we are informed that the policy of the Service is not to ask for payment in advance, as that complicates accounting; it expects to fill orders and trust the recipients to pay later in the manner most convenient to them. With regard to transfer of foreign money, since the first aim is to aid research as far as resources permit, such details will be arranged after the copying is done. The customs formalities connected with the importation of such films—which of course are of educational character—should be inquired into by anyone planning to order them.

Generous as is the indicated position with regard to payments, it may be that in some circumstances leprosy workers who might wish to take advantage of this service may be deterred from doing so, either because of difficulty or expense of transmitting the relatively small sums that will usually be involved or, in the case of workers connected with institutions supported by voluntary subscriptions, even by the lack of funds. We are authorized to say that the Leonard Wood Memorial, as a simple means of furthering the dissemination of information concerning leprosy, is prepared to aid such persons in this matter. Requests should be addressed to it at No. 1 Madison Avenue, New York City, preferably through the head office of the organization or institution represented.