

NEWS ITEMS

Damage to the London office.—Word has been received that the London headquarters of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, which by courtesy is also the headquarters of the International Leprosy Association, has been damaged by bombs so badly as to necessitate removal. On two previous occasions slight damage to windows and plaster had been sustained, but this time the building itself was badly cracked. Fortunately there was little loss of property, and apparently none of the records.

Nondelivery of mail in Europe.—Late in May, when the situation in Europe was approaching the crisis, letters were mailed from this office to Professor E. Marchoux, at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, and to Dr. A. Dubois, at the Prince Leopold Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp. Early in December, after the lapse of more than six months, these communications were returned to us undelivered. Word has been received recently from Dr. Dubois, but Prof. Marchoux has not been heard from.

The problem of a leprosarium in French Guiana.—Note was made recently in this department of a plan to establish a new leprosarium in French Guiana, on an island called La Mère. According to the procès verbal of a recent session of the Commission Consultative, in Paris, the governor general of that colony had reported that that plan seemed difficult of realization because of the slow and sometimes dangerous means of communication with Cayenne, and the considerable expense that would be involved in the establishment of the institution. He suggested, on the other hand,

that the penitentiary of Rocher du Kourou, which would soon be vacated, could be utilized for the purpose. All of the features of organization and installation for a group of 500 to 600 persons already exist; the site is agreeable and healthy and agriculture is feasible; isolation is easy, while access by road is possible throughout the year. The leprosarium at Acarouany should, it was proposed, be maintained for some time for recalcitrants. In the discussion of this plan by the Commission the opinion was expressed that there is no need to continue the Acarouany institution. Regarding Kourou, it was noted that it is 40 kilometers from Cayenne, that the food problem is difficult, and that there is no doctor there. It was agreed that it would not be satisfactory to employ that institution as proposed unless provision should be made for a permanent physician, and it was suggested that if that should not be possible, an agricultural colony might be established on the island of Cayenne, though that would involve the expense of construction.

Original leprosy regulations, Colombia.—The first page of the first issue for 1940, of the *Revista Colombiana de Leprologia* is dedicated to the memory of Gen. Francisco de Paula Santander, on the 100th anniversary of his death, who as President of Nueva Granada promulgated, on February 21st, 1835, the first antileprosy regulations in Colombia. These, extraordinarily detailed, are reproduced textually in the succeeding 27 pages.

A children's pavilion at Agua de Dios.—On May 6th last, the centenary of the death of General Francisco de Paula Santander, Colombia's greatest hero, there was inaugurated at the Agua de Dios leprosarium a modern and very attractive pavilion for children. It has a capacity of 100 inmates and a boarding-school for them under the direction of the Monjas Negras, a local society of Agua de Dios. —M. BERNAL LONDOÑO

First leprosarium in Mexico.—The first institution of this kind in Mexico, the Dr. Pedro López leprosarium, at Zoquiapán, has been constructed as a dependency of the Secretaria de Asistencia Publica at a cost of 2,000,000 pesos, with a capacity of 600 patients. Dr. Roberto Núñez Andrade has been appointed director, according to a note in the *Boletín de la Oficina Sanitaria Panamericana*.

The village of Akata, in Togo.—In the French mandated territory of Togo, the medical authorities have in the past been particularly preoccupied with the urgent problem of trypanosomiasis. The Ministry of Colonies had decided, however, that during the next three years efforts should be made to develop a plan for the amelioration of the condition of the lepers, based on the establishment of segregation villages in which they could live as normally as possible. The first phase of that plan had been realized with the formal inauguration of such a village at Akata, in the southern part of the region, on December 28, 1939. A report that has come to hand indicates marked appreciation on the part of the native authorities. A leprous chief is quoted as saying, in effect: "If we had had to wait for the Tongolese to take care of us, we would have waited until the end of the world; for the Tongolese, despite their many qualities, do not like the leper. The Germans never had any desire to provide for us. It was necessary for France to come before anyone took thought of our misery." It

was expected—at that time—that similar establishments would be provided in other parts of the territory.

B.E.L.R.A. aid in Nigeria.—It has been learned from London that in spite of the curtailment of activity enforced upon the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association by war conditions, that organization was able to send three doctors to leprosaria in Nigeria last year. They are Dr. H. A. Kelsey, to Zaria; Dr. Chas. Ross, to Uzuakoli; and Dr. A. S. Garrett, to Oji River.

The children's homes, Kumi, Uganda.—In reporting for 1939 on this unusual organization, Miss Laing informed the Mission to Lepers that 531 patients had been treated in the leprous children's home, an increase of 75 over the previous year, and 52 had been discharged, all without deformity and all able to read, write, do arithmetic and make their own clothes. Six boys and six girls were being trained for dispensary work, some of them continuing this training though they had become symptom free, and the applications of three girls for training in general nursing were being considered. One boy from this institution had completed successfully his first year in the teachers' training class at Buwalasi College. All carpentry and repair work at Kumi is now done by trained leper boys, and farm work is developing. A home at Kumi for healthy children of inmates of the Ongino colony has been completed, and there are 61 babies there.

Leprosy and sterilization.—The following note is quoted from the Egyptian Gazette: There are a good many things to be said in favour of a properly and carefully applied sterilization law, but that it will mean the elimination of leprosy in a generation, as is claimed by a writer in an Arabic newspaper, is not one of them. There is still much about this horrible disease which science does not know, yet it is at least certain that leprosy is not transmitted hereditarily. The offspring of leper parents, if taken away shortly after birth, do not develop the disease. This is a definite fact, and consequently sterilization can play no part whatever in the national struggle against this scourge. One had supposed this to be commonly known, and it is surprising to find a supporter of sterilization quoting its application to leprosy as a point highly in its favour. [It is not evident whether the writer of this note, or the writer of the one commented on, missed the point of leprosy workers who advocate sterilization.]

Antileprosy organization in Italy?—In an account of the creation of the Fondation Père Damien, emanating from Brussels, it is stated that while that was being accomplished the Rome colonial news agency "Le Colonie" had announced that Prince Chigi, grand master of the Order of Malta, was founding a kindred institution in Italy for the purpose of fighting leprosy in the Italian colonial empire.

Treatment at Purulia, India.—Among other features of the treatment work now being carried on at this institution, as reported by Dr. G. B. Archer to the Mission to Lepers, special note is made of the care of trophic ulcers. Now in use is a modification of an ointment recommended by Oberdoerffer and Collier (1939), the mercurochrome having been omitted and eucalyptus oil included in the same quantity. All clean ulcers are dressed with this ointment once a week, and in suitable cases weekly

injections are given around the ulcers. Special eye, nose and dental clinics are held. Whole wheat is being used as an additional diet where possible, and also sprouted gram. In bacteriological examinations preceding discharge, some cases regarded as negative were found to be positive when multiple smears were made, and the practice has been modified accordingly. Because relapses have not been infrequent, it is now the rule that a case must be found negative on at least three monthly examinations before it is declared negative.

In the Shan States, Burma.—The development of the work for lepers in this region has recently been reported in our pages by Dr. Richard Buker. In a later report to the Mission to Lepers he states, with particular satisfaction, that the central colony has now been turned over to the state, which has assumed full financial responsibility. It is expected that a full-time doctor will be engaged soon. The missionary superintendent remains as formerly, and the eight outside colonies are still financed as before. Three homes for uninfected children have been opened, with 71 child wards. A sewing class has been started in the central colony, where all clothes—some 1,800 garments per year—for the 900 lepers under care have to be made; those who learn to do this work well are paid two cents per garment for all that they make outside of the regular work hour.

The Loilem colony, Shan States.—After having been completely remodelled, the leper settlement at Loilem, directed by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Capitanio, was reopened last year with a ceremony attended by the High Commissioner for the Shan States and local personalities, according to a report from Toungoo, Burma, in the *Catholic Times* (London). A start was made some years ago with bamboo huts, which have been replaced by a dozen small buildings of masonry, with a residence for the Sisters. Lodged two by two, the inmates have small plots of ground to cultivate, with "other light work to suit their fancy." Several of the local Saboa, or princelings, have engaged themselves to provide funds for the erection of additional buildings.

War donation by lepers at Sungei Buloh.—A clipping from the *Straits Times* (Singapore) of last August, reporting on War Funds sent to London from Malaya, headlines a contribution from the inmates of the Sungei Buloh settlement. "One of the most touching contributions yet made to the fund... a quite small amount, \$25" from the inmates and staff in honor of the safe return from leave of Dr. and Mrs. Gordon A. Ryrie.

Notes on leprosaria in China.—The following notes on certain of the leprosaria in China are taken mainly from recent issues of the *Leper Quarterly*. The National Leprosarium of Shanghai, which was built, supported and directly controlled by the Chinese Mission to Lepers as an experimental station of treatment and administration, has completed its fourth year. The last two years were spent in an emergency location at 16 Brennan Road, in the International Settlement. Its buildings—temporary, built of bamboo mat—are filled to capacity, with a large waiting list. Because of the simplicity of its emergency equipment and the excessively high cost of food and medicines, the leprosarium committee had limited the number of inmates to 120. Also for economic reasons the staff had been considerably reduced. The morale of the patients has on the whole been excellent, de-

spite many deprivations in their present location. Under the supervision of Dr. Lee S. Huizenga they are making good progress, physically and otherwise. Unique among the institutions of its kind in China, it is said, the inmates have organized their own church, educational classes and Boy Scouts, and they are preparing to publish their own magazine, to be called "The Morning Light Quarterly." Three investigators had recently "braved" a trip to Tazang, the permanent institution outside of the city which had been vacated at the outbreak of hostilities. It was found that the Formosan farmers who had been living in the buildings had all left, the structures remaining in good condition although denuded of their equipment and fixtures. The date for their reoccupation is still uncertain and remote.

A report of a visit to the leprosy institutions in Shantung, by Mr. T. C. Wu, secretary of the Chinese Mission to Lepers, illustrates the difficulties of travel under the existing conditions in that region. Besides several leprosy clinics, there are four leprosaria, two of the hospital type and two of the nature of "homes." Of the former, the one at Tsinan, run by personnel of the Cheeloo University, is limited by financial circumstances to 40 inmates, only males being taken in. Treatment as given there is said to be exceptionally good and correspondingly effective. The other one, at Tsingchowfu, opened in 1936, is described as one of the best of its kind in the country. There are 36 patients there at present—again all men, for lack of accommodations for women—but more are being treated as outpatients. Here, too, the results of treatment of inpatients is reported to be highly satisfactory. The institution has an area of land said to be capable of producing most of the wheat needed by the inmates, but it is not usable under present conditions. Of the two institutions of home type, one at Tenghsien has around 150 inmates, the other, at Yenchowfu, 45.

At the Haihow leprosarium, on Hainan Island, where there are 152 inmates, the "new conditions" have not interfered with the work, and the inmates are occupied with crops, planting trees, road work, etc. Dr. N. Bercovitz has reported from there that since the occupation of Hainan the Japanese have been sympathetic toward the work being done for the lepers. Shortly before, they had contributed 10 bags of rice, about 2,000 pounds, which was particularly helpful because of the high price and shortage of supply of rice. At the Kwang-chi Home in Hanchow, superintended by Dr. S. D. Sturton, the number of inmates has been reduced to about 95 since the outbreak of the war. At the Nanchang leprosarium, work is being carried on uninterruptedly in spite of the war and unrest. The social welfare department of the local city government has recently made a grant of 10 cents per day (local currency) toward the expense of feeding, but on account of shortage of funds only volunteers (about 20 out of 106) are being given treatment. The Hankow Rotary Club has become interested in the work of the clinic in that city and has offered a subsidy of \$100.00 per month for one year. In recognition of this help, the name has been changed to The Rotary Leprosy Clinic, though it remains an integral part of the Union Hospital. In response to an appeal from the provincial health administration of Yunnan, the Chinese Mission to Lepers has appropriated the sum of NC\$10,000 as a contribution toward the construction of a leprosarium in Kunming (formerly Yunnanfu).

Diphtheria antitoxin at Haihow.—According to an informal report from Hainan, in the last issue of the *Leper Quarterly*, diphtheria antitoxin had been employed in the Haihow leprosarium and at the Mission Hospital for a period of two months, "with really very good results, so that many of the lepers are much encouraged."

Famine conditions in Shantung, China.—Under date of March 31, 1939, Dr. Ronald J. Still reported to the Mission to Lepers on conditions that were affecting the Tsingchoufu leprosarium, in Shantung. Famine conditions in North China, prevailing over a great part of the area which the leprosarium serves, were the most severe within living memory. In one district alone, with between 300,000 and 400,000 population, it was estimated that 97 percent of the population had no grain at all, and were having to live on roots, the early leaves and the bark of trees, and anything that they could dig up. Wheat chaff and kao-liang husks were selling for more than wheat used to cost before the war. Hundreds of people were dying of hunger, and suicides were common. Children were being sold and given away because of inability to find food for them. The cost of living had more than trebled during the preceding twelve months. Flour, which before the war cost \$3.10 per bag, could not be bought for \$16.00 in Tsingchou. Leprosy drugs had gone up in price proportionally.

Conditions in Korea.—Writing last summer from Soonchun, Korea, to the American Mission to Lepers, Dr. R. M. Wilson stated that the rice fields of the colony were dry and the rice dead. For three months there had been practically no rain, and a real famine was ahead for both Korea and Japan. With only a third of the average crop in prospect, the 210 inmates, who depend upon their rice crops for food, were facing difficulties. Cotton cloth was scarce; it was required by law that 50 percent fiber and only 50 percent cotton be used in the making of cloth; rayon was plentiful. In one transaction involving four pounds of nails, four permits from the police to purchase them were required. Metal, wire, cotton, gasoline, oil and such materials were very scarce and expensive, and many of them were unobtainable.