

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON LEPROSY.

The *Leprosy Review*, the quarterly publication of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, contains a most interesting report by Dr. E. Muir, C.I.E., the General Secretary-Treasurer of the International Leprosy Association, and Medical Secretary of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, on the International Congress of Leprosy, held in Cairo from March 21st to 27th, besides other important papers. It is fifteen years since the last International Congress on Leprosy was held, and that held in Cairo was in many ways unique.

"It is the first time that the Governments of all countries that are concerned in any way with leprosy have been invited by the country acting as host to send official delegates, and these invitations met with a most satisfactory response, no fewer than fifty countries being officially represented. The Congress was organised under the patronage of H.M. King Farouk, and a strong Committee was formed, with the Minister of Public Health as President, and Prof. Khalil Bey, as Secretary, ably assisted by Dr. Dalgamoumi. This Committee made all arrangements for conducting the Congress. It also made lavish provision for social entertainments, and for visits to scientific institutions and places of general and scientific interest.

"The scientific side was fittingly delegated to a Committee composed of the Council and officials of the International Leprosy Association.

"Four sub-committees were appointed, their respective subjects being: classification, treatment, endemology, and control, and *in vitro* cultivation of *M. Lepræ*. Care was taken to see that on each committee opposing viewpoints should be represented. The objects in view were (a) to reach as far as possible agreement on matters in dispute; and (b) failing agreement, to formulate common methods of procedure along which all could work, and common methods of record which could make it possible to compare results obtained in different places. The lines have been clarified along which concerted action should be taken in the next five years, at the end of which time it is proposed to hold the next Congress.

"The papers read at the Congress were divided into six sections, one whole session being devoted to each. These sections comprised: A. Geographical Distribution and Epidemiology; B. Clinical Types and Classification; C. Research, including Cultivation and Inoculation of the Leprosy Organism; D. Treatment; E. Methods of Control; F. Miscellaneous, including Rat and Buffalo Leprosy.

"Among the many aspects of interest and importance raised, a few may be mentioned which attracted particular attention.

"Perhaps the most outstanding of these was the much-discussed difference between the two main types of leprosy. In this connection it may be mentioned that the term 'cutaneous,' as applied to one of these types, has been definitely abandoned in favour of the term 'lepromatous.' There is general agreement that the lepromatous type of lesion differs widely from the neural, and especially from the tuberculoid. This difference extends to all aspects of leprosy. The clinical and histological pictures are distinct; the prognosis is much more favourable in the tuberculoid; the lines of treatment differ in the two types, as do also the methods of control. The tuberculoid type of lesion, at first supposed to be confined to one or two countries, is now recognised to have a much wider distribution; it may, in fact, be the commonest type.

"Under *treatment*, the primary importance of general physical improvement was again emphasised. It is recognised that the principal predisposing causes may vary in

different places, also that the disease may take on a more severe form and be less amenable to treatment than in others, though whether this is due to psychological, sociological or economic differences is not yet clearly determined.

"The oils of the various chaulmoogra or *hydnocarpus* species still hold first place under special treatment. Reports were given from various centres where better results had been obtained with larger doses of the oil or esters, as much as 20 c.c. or more being given subcutaneously per week. These larger doses are now made possible by the pure nature of the oil prepared from carefully selected seeds.

"French workers reported promising results with a new preparation in the form of a combination of Chaulmoogra and Cholesterol, which, in the form of a fine emulsion, is given intravenously.

"The Cairo Congress was the occasion of the first General Meeting of the International Leprosy Association. The formation of this Association was one of the important outcomes of the leprosy conference held in the Philippines in 1931. It includes in its membership leading leprologists throughout the world, and has done much by means of its quarterly journal to co-ordinate efforts in all countries where leprosy is a disease of importance."

The President is Dr. E. Marchoux, and the General Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. E. Muir.

"The Congress provided an opportunity—and this was perhaps, after all, its most valuable aspect—for lonely workers scattered all over the world to meet together, face to face, with their colleagues in other countries. We had read with interest the publications of many of these colleagues, and had agreed or disagreed with their findings. But at these meetings the dry bones of scientific discussion became clothed with flesh and blood. Friendships were formed which will make future discussions more human. In their arduous and often disappointing labours isolated workers will look back to those strenuous days of fellowship at the Cairo Congress."

The next International Congress is to be held in Paris in 1943.

"This is particularly appropriate, as the new President of the International Leprosy Association is Prof. Marchoux, of the Pasteur Institute, the well-known authority on leprosy. While some agreements have been reached at Cairo, much more important is the co-ordinated effort which has been set in motion, and which should make it possible, after the next five years, to record steady progress."

The efforts to alleviate the sufferings of leprosy people, and to find a cure for this terrible scourge, must be of intense interest to all humane people, and especially to members of the Nursing Profession, who are brought in contact with sufferers from the disease, and who realise not only the physical but the mental anguish they endure. No efforts, and no sacrifices, can be too great to find a means to eradicate this age-long disease, and nurses who share in these efforts, and meanwhile devote themselves to the care of these sorely stricken people, could do no finer work.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

It is to be regretted that no Papers were sent in reply to last month's question: "What is Hysteria: its Nature, Symptoms and Treatment?" We hope this distressing illness will receive some serious consideration by nurses.

QUESTION FOR NEXT MONTH.

Give a short description of the symptoms and signs of tuberculosis of the hip joint, and the nursing in its treatment.

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