

EDITORIAL.

The fuel crisis in Britain early this year held up the publication of the January number of the *Leprosy Review* until late in April. The April and July issues of the Journal are therefore combined in the present number.

Readers will learn with regret that Dr. E. Muir has resigned from the combined post of Editor of this Journal and Medical Secretary of the B.E.L.R.A. He has, however, consented to act with Sir Leonard Rogers as Honorary Medical Adviser to the Association.

Dr. Muir became editor of the *Leprosy Review* and Medical Secretary of B.E.L.R.A. in 1935.

The *Leprosy Review* of October 1935 states, "It will be noted by our readers that Dr. E. Muir, of the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine, is taking over the Medical Secretaryship of the Association from October 1st. Dr. Muir will edit the new volume of the Review from January 1936 We are convinced that under Dr. Muir's editorship the *Review* will become increasingly useful and valuable to those who wish to keep in touch with modern advances and have not the time to read the more technical journals." This prediction has been amply fulfilled.

From the same issue we quote an appreciation of Dr. Muir on the occasion of his retirement from the post of leprosy research worker at the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine. "His width of view, insight and patient work have resulted in far reaching advances which have been of incalculable value in placing the dreaded leprosy within the pale of preventable and curable diseases, using the latter word in its popular sense. The use of creosoted pure hydnocarpus oil and ethyl esters prepared by his simple method have furnished effective treatments at a cost within the reach of all. The importance of the stress he has laid on the treatment of all complicating debilitating diseases to increase the resisting power of the patients is universally recognised. The surveys he organised throughout India have revealed the nature and extent of the leprosy problem and enabled hundreds of leprosy clinics to be opened and treat some 100,000 cases a year, mostly in an early stage, at a minimum cost; and this in turn has led to the recent development of following up the patients to their houses and arranging for the home isolation of the infective cases in order to strike at the root of the problem by stopping new infection. Dr. Muir has completed over 30 years' service in Palestine and India,

where he laboured as one of the most successful and hard working of medical missionaries up to 1920. Our Association is very fortunate in being able to make use of his unrivalled experience in the cause that he has so much at heart."

No truer index than this tribute could be given of the value of Dr. Muir's services to the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association and the cause of leprosy work in general.

We commend to our readers a close study of Professor Araujo's modification of the clamp method for smear taking. The standard slit and clip methods of taking smears are essentially teased tissue preparations where bacillary pockets may be overlaid or overlooked. These methods can only be regarded as sample "spot surveys" of bacillary incidence. The clamp method, if it is found widely successful, may by its relative exclusion of tissue debris, prove the basis of a new technique for bacillary counts. Closely linked with this is the modification in staining method suggested by Dr. Oliveira Castro as a development of Cooper's technique. The method would appear to bring us a new precision in the study of the morphology of the bacillus. This work opens up the way for considerable further investigation. The part played by these bacillary nodules in the physiology of the bacillus is by no means clear and further research is needed on the incidence of these nodules in the different phases of leprosy and in lepromatous and tuberculoid reactions. Slides of the clamp method and of the new staining modification can be made by any worker with accurate technique and with the essential equipment of a simple laboratory.

One of the functions of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association is to make known the results of such research and to stimulate wider application and study of such new methods, so that information gleaned from places with widely varying leprosy conditions can be pooled and assessed. It is to be hoped, therefore, that wherever laboratory facilities are available the clamp method and Dr. Oliveira Castro's staining modification will be studied with a view to obtaining composite experience. Only thus can we obtain advances in technique which can be recommended for general acceptance.

Readers will welcome Dr. Cochrane's article on child leprosy—a subject on which he speaks with authority and which cannot be overstressed. It is unfortunately still true that adult leprosy *per se* receives in many endemic countries a disproportionate share of the available effort in the campaign against the disease. It is still insufficiently realised that the main importance of an adult infective leper from the public health point of view is the number of children

within contact range of that leper. It is also unfortunately true that in many places the conscience and imagination of the community have, as yet, been insufficiently aroused to the essential tragedy of this needless inoculation of children.

In this issue, by the courtesy of Dr. Lowe, we reprint an article, "Comments on the History of Leprosy" from *Leprosy in India*, January 1943. We feel that this historical study merits the careful attention of those who may have missed it through the restrictions of its original wartime publication.

In conclusion we present the following message to our readers from Dr. Ernest Muir:—

In retiring from the Editorship of *Leprosy Review* I am glad to be able to hand over the task to Dr. Gordon Ryrie, my successor as Editor and Medical Secretary of BELRA.

Dr. Ryrie has the two main requirements of an editor: he has a thorough mastery of the subject, having worked at leprosy in Malaya for some twenty years, and he has a flair for interesting and concise writing.

Leprosy Review has an important role to play, and we have frequently received letters of gratitude from readers, both medical and non-medical, engaged in leprosy work in lonely corners of the Empire.

I wish to thank all those who have contributed during the last ten years, and trust that they will continue their help. I hope also that others will assist by sending in articles, news, and other items which will be of help and interest to our readers.

I am particularly grateful to Sir Leonard Rogers who, besides helping in many other ways, took over my duties as Editor during the last four years of the war.