

## EDITORIAL

We publish in this number of the Review two articles, one reporting favourable results with thiosemicarbazone and the other with isonicotinic acid hydrazide (isoniazid). In both instances the writers claim that these drugs have a favourable effect in leprosy. At the relatively recent international leprosy meetings—the International Leprosy Congress held in Madrid and the Leprosy Missions Conference in Lucknow—thiosemicarbazone received favourable comment, but isoniazid was not recommended. These two contributions indicate that we have not yet discovered the ideal anti-leprosy remedy, and therefore we must not rest content with the fact that because the sulphones are definitely superior to the older remedies, and because there are alternative remedies for use where there is sulphone intolerance, we now can be satisfied with the therapeutic position in leprosy. While the percentages of negatives under sulphone and certain other treatments are encouragingly high, there are a sufficient number of cases who remain positive over a period of five years and more, and others who seem quite intolerant to sulphones, to make us concerned lest the excessive enthusiasm engendered by the new treatments causes public health workers to feel that this treatment, if only widespread enough to reach the majority of leprosy patients, will ultimately—and some appear to believe in a relatively short time—eliminate leprosy from the world. It must be remembered that the primary principles of prevention—the separation in some form or another of the infective case from the healthy child—is neglected at our peril. It also must be borne in mind that no definite conclusions with regard to the effectiveness of a drug in leprosy can be drawn under a period of three years. We welcome the reports of careful workers, and are confident that the new successes in therapy of leprosy will stimulate these and others to search for more effective remedies, so that the final control of this baffling disease will be hastened. There is a growing body of opinion which is inclined to favour the parenteral use of sulphones. In view of the general acceptance of oral dapsone, this opinion must be taken into account, lest we put aside as impractical or inconvenient a method of administration which in the long run may show more satisfactory results.

The article discussing a case of leprosy in a seven months old child serves as a salutary reminder of the danger of exposing children to infection, and emphasises that the greatest care must be taken to separate the healthy child from contact with the infective case.

This number of the Review again stresses the need for reparative surgery in the rehabilitation of the leprosy patient, and challenges us to endeavour to see that when a patient is discharged the physical stigmata of the disease shall as far as possible be neutralised so that our friends can return to society with a healthy outlook, and not with warped minds due to the ravages of leprosy on their bodies. The importance of this cannot be stressed too often.

We are glad to publish an article from the Christian Medical College, Vellore, on the technique for staining *M. leprae* in nerve preparations. The staff of this college have contributed greatly to the better understanding of leprosy, and they, along with the Bombay and other workers in India, have maintained the high excellence of the work which has been done in India ever since the pioneer days of Rogers and Muir.

It is with regret that the Editor has to take farewell of his readers, but would like cordially to welcome the new Medical Secretary of BELRA, and the Editor of *Leprosy Review*—Dr. John Lowe. Dr. Lowe needs no introduction to the Review, and his outstanding achievements in leprosy, particularly his contributions to the therapy of the disease, guarantee the future usefulness of the Review, and ensure that workers in leprosy, especially those who have no access to the more scientific journals, will not only be able through the medium of this quarterly to keep abreast of modern knowledge, but will be encouraged and stimulated to continue their efforts with increased zeal, hastening the coming of that day when leprosy is no longer a scourge which mutilates the body, and what is more tragic, the mind, of so many in this world of men.