

OBITUARY

We announce with great sorrow the death of Dr. John Lowe. It is little more than a year since he left Nigeria and became Medical Secretary of B.E.L.R.A. Among his duties was the editorship of this journal. Dr. Lowe's long medical experience of every form of anti-leprosy work made him an ideal man for this post, and as far as impaired health permitted, he threw himself enthusiastically into all the activities of the Association.

Born in Birmingham in 1895, after service in the first world war, in which he was awarded the M.C., he studied medicine at Birmingham University, graduating in 1922. In the following year, he joined the Methodist Missionary Leprosarium at Dichpalli, Nizam's Dominions, where he worked for 8 years. In 1931 he was invited to join the Leprosy Research Department at the Calcutta School for Tropical Medicine. There he worked for some 15 years, chiefly at leprosy research, but during the second world war he devoted himself to more general medicine, editing the Indian Medical Gazette, and acting as Professor of Tropical Medicine and Director of the School.

While in Dichpalli he became Doctor of Medicine with a thesis on malaria. Later he was awarded the K.I.H. gold medal for his work on leprosy.

In 1946 Lowe returned to England, where after some further study he obtained the M.R.C.P. In the following year he was appointed Director of the Leprosy Research Unit at Uzuakoli in Nigeria, being encouraged to renew his leprosy work by the reports of success with the sulphone drugs. He was the first to introduce the oral treatment of leprosy with diaminodiphenylsulphone (DDS), and after preliminary trials he arranged for mass treatment throughout Nigeria with this comparatively simple and inexpensive drug, which is now regarded almost universally as the treatment of choice.

While in Nigeria, Lowe was awarded F.R.C.P. and last year the C.B.E. In April, 1954, he returned to England, having been offered the post of Medical Secretary to B.E.L.R.A. While still in Nigeria, there had been warnings of heart trouble, and this increased during the closing months of last year, making it

inadvisable, to his great regret, for him to undertake a visit overseas to acquaint himself at first hand with the work of B.E.L.R.A. in East Africa.

Dr. Lowe had the true scientific spirit, critical of his own work, he was slow to come to conclusions. But once he had taken up a project, he threw himself wholeheartedly into its solution, though often facilities were scanty and he had to improvise and work in what many would have considered impossible conditions.

Leprosy has so far attracted but few first class research workers, and the loss of Lowe has removed one of the best of these few. It is hoped that his life and example will act as a call to young medical graduates to enter this very needful and now much more hopeful line of research.

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Until a permanent successor to Dr. Lowe is appointed, Dr. E. Muir, Hon. Medical Advisor, will discharge the duties of the Medical Secretary of B.E.L.R.A., including editing of "Leprosy Review." He will be glad to receive useful and interesting contributions—original articles, news items, correspondence, etc.—for publication.