

## Book Review

**WHO Expert Committee on Leprosy, Third Report.**

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION: *Technical Report Series*, 1966, No. 319; 31 pages. Price: 3/6. \$0.60. Sw.f. 2.--. Also Published in French and Spanish. Available through H.M. Publishing Office, Oxford St, London.

This valuable report contains 29 pages and should be in every leprologists' hands.

This report is divided into two sections: the first on leprosy control, the second on research. The first part is a review of present knowledge on the epidemiology and chemotherapy of leprosy and sets out the diagnosis and the classification to be used in field projects. In order to overcome present difficulties, it recommends that a system of priorities should be adopted. In countries with limited budgets, all means available should be concentrated on dealing with infectious cases and their contacts. In wealthier countries, with better medical facilities, as many non-infectious cases as possible should also be dealt with. Funds for leprosy control should not be diverted to reconstructive surgery since, however dramatic the achievements of reconstructive surgery, the aim of control is to

prevent disabilities by early diagnosis and treatment rather than leave them till they need correction. As in all other campaigns against disease, detailed planning and organization are necessary.

The second part of the report is devoted to research. The Expert Committee remarks that every aspect of leprosy control discussed in the report emphasizes the need for intensified research, which it considers should be conducted in general centres of research throughout the world. Fundamental advances have been made in leprosy research since the publication of the Second Report in 1959. The infection has been transmitted to animals; proliferation of the bacillus, though to a limited extent, has been reported to occur in mouse monocytes and rat and human fibroblasts; and certain morphological characteristics of the bacilli have been found to offer a clue to infectiousness, as well as a measure of the response to chemotherapy. These advances open the way to further investigations, and the report examines what is being done and makes recommendations on the directions research in leprosy should take in the future.