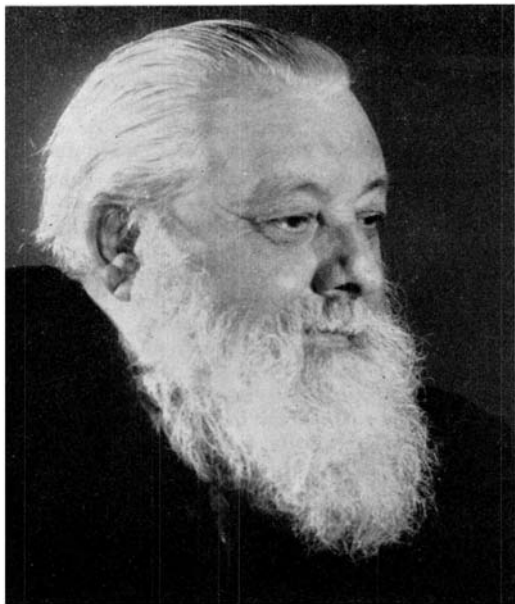


## Obituary Notice

FRANZ HEMERIJCKX, 1902-69

Dr. Frank Hemerijckx died in Louvain, Belgium, on 15 October, 1969, at the age of 67.



Hemerijckx was born in the Flemish town of Ninove. After completing his medical studies, he went to the Congo in 1929. The first physician to be appointed in Tshumbe Sainte Marie, a remote station in the Kasai, he found himself responsible for the medical care of the whole population in an area where sleeping sickness, yaws, onchocerciasis and malnutrition were all highly prevalent. Adding leprosy to the list, at a time when out-patient treatment for this disease was unheard of, he organized a settlement at Dikungu with the specific aim of allowing leprosy patients to lead a normal village life. This was later to develop into an important treatment and rehabilitation centre.

Appointed Provincial Leprologist in 1947, he took advantage of the availability of sulphones to launch an extensive leprosy control programme based on early diagnosis and out-patient treatment in dispensaries and general

hospitals. By 1952 over 60,000 patients were under regular treatment.

In 1955, on retirement from the Belgian Colonial Service, he began a second career in South India. Settling in Polambakkam, Tamil Nadu, in July, 1955, he opened his first clinic with 167 patients. Five years later, thanks to his remarkable flair for personal contacts, his aptitude for meticulous planning, and his constant preoccupation to train auxiliary workers, over 20,000 patients were being regularly treated or followed up at the clinics "under the trees".

In 1961, Dr. Hemerijckx was appointed WHO Consultant in Leprosy to the Government of India.

After retiring from field activities in 1965, he remained very active in Belgian and various European agencies connected with leprosy (ELEP, FOPERDA and The Damien Foundation) and made several trips to the Far East, South-East Asia, and Africa.

Retaining a very lucid mind up to the end, he never ceased to insist on the need for a more complete integration of leprosy activities in the general health services. Dr. Hemerijckx had been a member of the International Leprosy Association since 1934. He was presented with the Damien-Dutton Award on the occasion of the Ninth International Leprosy Congress in London in 1968.

A phenomenal worker, a man of strong convictions, able to make decisions, and always ready and willing to apply new knowledge and new approaches for the benefit of leprosy patients, Franz Hemerijckx had a contagious enthusiasm that welcomed new attitudes towards leprosy and greatly facilitated the development of leprosy control programmes in various parts of the world.

Dr. Hemerijckx is survived by his wife and four children, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

(We are indebted to Professor Michel F. Lechat for this tribute.)