

ALERT IS TEN YEARS OLD

The All Africa Leprosy Rehabilitation and Training Centre in Addis Ababa was founded on 11 December, 1965, and at the Annual General Meeting held on 19 March, 1976 the achievements of the first decade were reviewed. The limited initial conception of rehabilitation for those suffering from deformities due to leprosy, and the training of workers from African countries in all aspects of rehabilitation, was a reflection of the origin of the idea for the creation of the Centre, which was the International Society for Rehabilitation of the Disabled, the moving spirit being Professor Paul Brand. A report by Dr Stanley Browne reviewing the possibilities and disadvantages of locations in predominantly English-speaking countries in Africa narrowed the choice, and Ethiopia was finally selected.

From rehabilitation to treatment and control; from an urban institutional centre to a rural demonstration area; from a small group representing the Leprosy Missions and the University to a very broad-based and internationally representative body of sponsors—such has been the progress of ALERT over the past 10 years.

Training courses have been provided for varying periods for physicians, orthopaedic surgeons, rural area leprosy supervisors, rehabilitation technicians, physiotherapists, laboratory technicians and others. Students come from many African countries, and from other continents.

The service reports for the year 1975 and the past decade make impressive reading, regarding both the hospital itself and the numbers of leprosy patients under treatment in Addis Ababa and in a neighbouring control area.

In addition to a most fruitful collaboration with the (British) Medical Research Council, the Armauer Hansen Research Institute, which is structurally an annexe to the hospital but administratively distinct, has made several important contributions to knowledge of the immunological aspects of leprosy.

The Ethiopian Government continues its generous financial support of the service functions of ALERT.

The last annual Kellersberger Lecture, sponsored by the American Leprosy Missions Inc, was given by Prof. Olaf K. Skinsnes; the next will be given by Dr Graham Weddell.

Dr Felton Ross will shortly (June 1976) be relinquishing his post as Director of Training, in which he has done conspicuous work during the difficult first decade of ALERT.

More African countries should be acquainted with the range of facilities provided by ALERT and send key members of their staff to profit from one or other of the courses given. (Address: The Director of Training, ALERT, PO Box 165, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.)