

Leprosy and the Community

LEPRA — ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1977

The 54th Annual Report of Lepra, presented at the Annual General Meeting in June 1978, covers the year 1977. It condenses into 20 pages the interest and concern for sufferers from leprosy felt by many people in all walks of life in Great Britain.

1977 was a record year for income. The total of £551,376 was achieved by Broadcast appeals, house to house collections, flag days, exhibitions, donations and an astonishing range of social events involving much generous and sacrificial service and often a great deal of enterprise and ingenuity. This is hinted at by a page of illustrations in the Report, but one really needs to turn to *Lepra News*, Lepra's quarterly publication, to gather details of the range of all this interest on the part of so many members of the general public, an interest stimulated by 10 Regional Organizers and 150 Honorary Representatives scattered across England, Scotland and Wales.

All these contributors may be more than satisfied by the way their gifts have been used. Pursuing the well publicized 5 main guidelines for support, Lepra has first continued to sustain major leprosy control projects in Malawi and Sierra Leone and given new grants in aid for development projects in India, Guyana and the Philippines.

In the sphere of research, Lepra is supporting in very practical ways the World Health Organization Special Task Forces IMMLEP and THELEP. Dr Rees, Chairman of Lepra's Medical Advisory Board, is a member of the Steering Committee of both Task Forces. Grants have been given for maintaining an armadillo colony in Britain under the care of Dr Rees as a vital element in the IMMLEP project, also to the Medical Research Council, The Royal College of Surgeons and the All India Institute for Medical Sciences, New Delhi.

Lepra's direct involvement in leprosy research is also personified in Dr Colin McDougall and his outstanding histopathological work at Oxford, related to THELEP and also to the Ciba-Geigy Rifampicin trial. An important research event in 1977 was the Heathrow Meeting sponsored by Lepra, to which representatives were invited from WHO and the Medical Commission of ILEP to consider the importance of dapsone resistance in relation to the control and treatment of leprosy.

Over 22,000 children suffering from leprosy benefited from Lepra's Children Fund in 1977. In the face of dapsone resistance financial provision has been made for combined therapy in appropriate cases.

One of the historic aspects of Lepra's work has been the fostering of

contacts between researchers, and enriching the experience of leprosy workers through fellowships and travel grants. The writer benefited from this as long ago as 1938, and over the years the cause of leprosy eradication has been greatly furthered by the involvement in leprosy research of specialists whose interest was first strengthened in this way. Several such grants were given in 1977.

Finally we pay tribute to the continued encouragement and support of Lepira in the publication of *Leprosy Review*, and especially to Mr G. F. Harris, the Director. With this issue the Journal has completed its 49th Volume, and its distribution of around 900 copies carries it into the hands of many a doctor and field worker for whom it is the only source of up to the minute information on matters of leprosy research and organization. From the beginning, Lepira has been responsible for this Journal, drawing together the specialists concerned in its production and providing essential financial undergirding. An important aspect of this has been the policy of generously subsidizing the distribution of the Journal to doctors engaged in field or hospital work where resources are limited, a service of great value. The status enjoyed by the Journal is evidenced by the number, range and quality of the original contributions submitted for publication. One of its features is the effort which is made to publish those which are accepted by the Editorial Board with a minimum of delay. In its sponsorship of *Leprosy Review* Lepira makes a contribution to the cause of leprosy eradication of great importance.

We offer our best wishes to Lepira for the year ahead.

T. F. DAVEY

“SET APART” — THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEPROSY MISSION FOR 1977

“Set Apart”, the Report of The Leprosy Mission for 1977, is a record of another year of remarkable progress. Attractively produced and very well illustrated, the front cover of the Report immediately invites the right kind of interest as it portrays patient, national doctor and expatriate physiotherapist all deeply concentrating on the care of the patient's hand, a scene in sharp contrast to the ghoulis pictures so frequently associated with leprosy publicity.

During the past 4 years the annual income of the Mission has increased from £1,000,000 to more than double that amount. Now very much an international organization, the financial support of the Mission from England and Wales is exceeded by support from Continental Europe, while giving by people in New Zealand, Australia and Canada is quite outstanding in relation to the population of those countries.

This great increase in resources has made expansion possible in every aspect of the worldwide commitments of the Mission. This report focuses upon *people*, set apart to seek, to heal, to restore and to care, to teach, to help and to witness, and so the many-faceted work of the Mission is covered.

The historic commitment of The Leprosy Mission to the Indian sub-continent continues. Emphasis on the quality and efficiency of field workers has led to major developments in training facilities, first at Karigiri, but also including Salur, Purulia and Miraj, with many Government sponsored trainees taking part in the courses provided. Thirty-five full-time doctors are now engaged in the extensive S.E.T. work supervised by the Mission, and more are needed in this, by far the largest Voluntary Agency leprosy control organization in India. It is the standing which the Mission enjoys in India which opened the door to developments in Bhutan, Bangladesh, and in lesser degree, in Nepal.

The Leprosy Mission has always fostered research in leprosy, from the highly sophisticated procedures associated with electron microscopy and mouse footpad inoculation to field studies and the enormous developments in corrective surgery, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. There is world-wide recognition for the great services of members of The Leprosy Mission staff in these fields, services which are still continuing, especially in India.

In Africa The Leprosy Mission supports leprosy control work in 15 countries and is a partner in the All Africa Research and Training Centre (ALERT) at Addis Ababa. In East and South East Asia the Mission has a key role in several countries, in close relation with University authorities at Taegu in Korea, and with Government in Thailand, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

Characteristic of The Leprosy Mission are the dedication of its workers and the open-minded generosity which the writer first experienced in 1938 at the Cairo Conference, when the General Secretary of the Mission offered financial assistance to Uzuakoli hospital, then just embarking on a major leprosy control programme. In 1977 no less than £214,000 was given in grants to centres run by societies other than those under the direct management of the Mission. This great international organization channels the concern of Christians in many lands who believe that "it is more blessed to give than to receive".

This review would be incomplete without a special reference to Dr Victor Das, for 15 years Secretary of the S.E. Asia Region of the Mission, who retired at the end of 1977 and is succeeded by Dr R. Thangaraj. During my years in India I had many contacts with Dr Das and had first hand knowledge of the dedication, skill and wisdom which he brought to his exceedingly onerous duties. His retirement after a lifetime of service for sufferers from leprosy in India is a great loss. We think of him with admiration and affection and offer best wishes for the years ahead to Mrs Das and himself.

T. F. DAVEY

EMMAUS-SWISS PALAMANER LEPROSY PROJECT, CHITOOR DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA, FIRST ANNUAL REPORT, FEBRUARY 1978

This 21-page report describes the growth of the Project, from the opening of the first clinic at Palamaner in September, 1977, to the end of that year. In an

introductory message from Dr M. Phaineua, Regional Director for WHO in New Delhi, we are reminded that leprosy is a major health problem in India, with 372 million people at risk and 3.2 million estimated to have the disease, of whom about 1.6 million have so far been registered for treatment; 10% of these are infectious.

The test describes Andhra Pradesh as one of the hyper-endemic zones, with 628,000 estimated cases, of whom 253,000 have been registered for treatment; the average prevalence for the State has been estimated at 14.8 per thousand. Within this, the Project has concentrated on the Chitoor District, with an overall estimated prevalence of 17.8 per thousand and the Report describes the steps taken in case-detection, classification, registration of disabilities and rehabilitation. So far, 13 peripheral clinics have been established, registering 1314 cases for treatment.

Clearly these are early days in an area where there is an immense amount of work to do in “reducing the incidence of leprosy within the area selected for control activities in a most efficient and economic way”, and we look forward to further reports of this Project, which is sponsored by Leprosy Relief Work Emmaus-Switzerland, while wishing it every success.

A. C. McDOUGALL