LIGUE EUROPÉENNE CONTRE LE RHUMATISME

REPORTS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES

BELGIUM

A research foundation has been created by the four Belgian universities in order to study the problems of the rheumatic diseases, and a chair of rheumatology has been established which is now held by Professor Michotte.

Recently the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the Belgian League were attended by many leading rheumatologists from other countries.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Regular scientific meetings are held and the Czech League offers substantial monetary awards for publications on the rheumatic diseases. Five principal consulting physicians have been appointed to rheumatism centres. The League supplies lecturers in rheumatology for post-graduate courses, and in 1951 these were attended by over 200 physicians.

DENMARK

Four laboratories have been established for research work connected with the rheumatic diseases, under the supervision of the University of Copenhagen. In one, pathological studies are being carried out on post-mortem material collected from all over the country; another is concentrating on the physiological characteristics of the synovial membrane and on problems connected with salicylic acid; a third is working on the histo-chemistry of the mesenchymal tissues and of hyaluronic acid in particular; and lastly the State Serum Institute laboratories for endocrinological research, immunology, serology, and bacteriology, undertake work on particular problems of the rheumatic diseases.

In addition there are three large clinical research departments which have recently been concentrating on work with cortisone and ACTH, particularly the latter. It is intended to establish permanent departments for rheumatology and physical medicine at Denmark’s two universities, Copenhagen and Århus.

FINLAND

Work in the field of rheumatic diseases is progressing rapidly and a new hospital for 300 rheumatic patients has been opened in Heinola with the prospect of another in Helsinki in the future. Regular scientific meetings are held and their proceedings published.

FRANCE

The national league, founded 20 years ago by Dr. Henri Forestier, divides its activities under three headings, scientific, social, and international.

Scientific meetings are held on the second Wednesday in each month at the Hôpital Cochin in Paris and many of the discussions are subsequently published. Meetings have also been held at other centres on such subjects as “Diseases of the Vertebral Column” in conjunction with the French orthopaedic society, “The Relation of Rheumatism to the Endocrine Glands”, “Rheumatism of the Sacro-iliac Joints”, and “Chronic Juvenile Rheumatism”.

The social side of the plan aims at the formation of medical teams to deal with the problems of these diseases. That these efforts are being successful is shown by their achievement in sponsoring the creation of a chair of clinical rheumatology at the Hôpital Cochin; this is now held by Prof. Coste with Prof. de Séze as his associate. The teaching of rheumatology has been organized by this faculty and steps have been taken to create an official status for specialists in rheumatology as has been done in Great Britain. A permanent commission on rheumatism has been established at the Ministry of Health and as a result there has been an increase in the number of diagnostic centres both in Paris and the provinces, and public money has been allocated for this purpose and for the purchase and distribution of cortisone and ACTH.

In the international sphere the French branch maintains a close liaison with neighbouring countries and other members of the European League.

ITALY

There has been a revival of interest in the rheumatic diseases since the war. In 1948 the “Italian Society for the study of Rheumatism and combating Rheumatic Disease” was formed officially at a meeting at Aquis during which papers were presented on certain clinical syndromes and on the pathological anatomy of osteo-arthritis. Since then
annual meetings have been held and the proceedings published.

Specialized centres now function in the University Clinics of Genoa, Rome, Catania, Bologna, Barí, Milan, Cagliari, Padua, and Turin, with out-patient departments and wards and access to the laboratories and other facilities of the parent hospitals.

At the meeting of the European League in Barcelona in 1951 the Italian rheumatological society was represented by Professor Sabatini.

**PORTUGAL**

In the last few years a rheumatic association has been founded and a special clinic opened in the University Hospital, Lisbon. It is proposed to form three centres under state control in the north, south, and central districts. The Lisbon centre is already established with clinical, social, and research departments.

**SPAIN**

In 1950 a special course of lectures on rheumatology was held in Madrid with a number of guest lecturers including Dr. W. S. C. Copeman, President of the European League. A tremendous amount of organization and preliminary work was carried out by Spanish rheumatologists for the 1951 Barcelona Congress which attracted a large international gathering. The success of these meetings was a tribute to their efforts.

**SWEDEN**

There is a scientific society limited to medical members supported by a rheumatological research council founded by the late King and a national social organization with some 10,000 members. Owing to the decline in the number of tuberculous patients more beds have been made available for rheumatic cases. It is considered in Sweden that the early treatment of cases of the rheumatic diseases should be carried out in specialized units and that later such cases may be transferred to general hospitals. It has been estimated that 3,000 beds are required for this purpose.

**SWITZERLAND**

The organization is based on a cantonal system and free consultations are held for sufferers in Geneva, Basle, and Zürich. It is proposed to build a Thermal hospital at Locc’he-les-Bains combining medical, spa, physiotherapy, and orthopaedic treatments. In Zurich a clinic with 60 beds is to be opened for rheumatic cases.

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**LIGUE INTERNATIONALE CONTRE LE RHUMATISME**

**EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS, 1953**

The eighth international congress of the Ligue Internationale contre le Rhumatisme will be held from August 24 to 28, 1953, at Geneva, Switzerland, and Aix-les-Bains, France. A special meeting in connection with the congress will be held at Zürich, Switzerland, on August 29. The programme of scientific discussions will be arranged as follows:

1. Tissus conjunctifs et rhumatisme.
2. Stéroides dans le traitement du rhumatisme.
3. Résultats éloignés de la chirurgie du rhumatisme de la hanche.
4. Réadaptation professionnelle.

Workers from several centres in Europe and America have already promised reports on their researches. Papers, which should be of 10 minutes’ duration, should be sent to the secretary of the National League to which the applicant belongs not later than February 1, 1953.

Further information may be had from Prof. K.-M. Walthard, Institut de Physiatrie, Hôpital Cantonal, Genève, Suisse. Applications for registration should be addressed to the nearest agency of the American Express Company who are organizing the travel arrangements.
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