

## Leprosy — Canadian missionaries leaders in helping victims

Few Canadians know much about leprosy, yet experts say 15 million people around the world suffer from the disfiguring disease.

It strikes mostly in tropical and subtropical countries but is by no means limited to the Third World. There are 100 known cases of leprosy in Canada, most of them in Toronto.

Although Canadian medical personnel rarely specialize in the disease, Canadians have been involved in the fight to eradicate it since 1892, says Rev. Douglas Graham, executive director of The Leprosy Mission Canada. Canadian missionaries still play a leading part in helping leprosy victims.

The Canadian branch of The Leprosy Mission International was formed when Wellesley C. Bailey, an Irish Presbyterian missionary, addressed a small meeting in Guelph, Ontario.

### Founded in Dublin

Mr. Bailey had established the original organization in Dublin 18 years earlier.

Today the interdenominational organization, which draws its support mainly from Protestant groups, operates more than 40 centres in Bhutan, Burma, India, Indonesia, Korea, Lesotho, Nepal and Papua New Guinea. It also gives money, training and drugs to other organizations that treat lepers in these and 27 other countries.

The mission treats all who have the disease alike regardless of religion. He says they have become accustomed to ostracism and are "tremendously impressed with the dedication of the Christian staff" who are not afraid to touch them.

### Christian pioneers

Attending religious services offered at mission centres is optional for patients, but Mr. Graham says many do convert to Christianity.

Paramedical workers employed by the mission are often former leprosy patients who have been cured by regular treatments of an inexpensive drug called Dapsone, which has been used since the late 1940s.

"It's a lonely task from every point of view," Mr. Graham says, because paramedics are often the only Christians in the community and are feared by the villagers,

who think they represent a threat to both health and religion.

Leprosy is caused by infection with a small, rod-shaped germ first identified in 1872.

It is not hereditary and is only mildly infectious. Medical personnel are still baffled by how it spreads.

The Leprosy Mission estimates that only three million of leprosy sufferers are receiving treatment — treatment which in many cases is inadequate.

Mr. Graham says it is difficult to persuade leprosy sufferers to come for regular treatments when it means walking 150 kilometres over mountains on infected feet or losing pay.

The mission says a third of leprosy sufferers are children and it estimates that another million people will contract the disease during the next five years.

Yet the days of the leper colony are past, Mr. Graham says, although some older leprosy sufferers who are seriously crippled and have been ostracized for most of their lives will always need an institutional home.

## Western provincial anniversaries

Saskatchewan and Alberta, which celebrate their seventy-fifth anniversaries as Canadian provinces this year are planning historical pageants, displays and athletic events. Visitors are invited to combine celebration activities with an exploration of historic sites and museums and enjoyment of the provinces' scenery and recreation.

The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad as far as Calgary in 1883, and connecting lines to Edmonton and Macleod in the early 1900s, opened vast new tracts of fertile land to settlement. In 1896, the Federal Government instituted a policy to bring settlers to western Canada. For \$10, any male over 18 could buy a quarter section of land (160 acres) if he would undertake to live on it at least part time and cultivate 30 acres in three years. Settlers came from eastern Canada, the United States, Britain, France, Germany and eastern Europe.

At Yorkton, Saskatchewan, the Western Development Museum depicts the life of various ethnic groups in the early 1900s. Near Moose Jaw, many deserted pioneer homesteads can still be seen. In Alberta, one of the railway cars that brought settlers from Montreal sits in

Calgary's Heritage Park, as if the settlers had just disembarked. At Vegreville and Shandro, east and northeast of Edmonton, are two of a number of heritage villages celebrating the life and times of settlers who were strong enough to survive drought, harsh winters and other adverse conditions to lay the foundations of today's prosperity.

Earlier history can be traced at such Alberta sites as Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park southeast of Lethbridge, where Indian pictures and symbols are carved and painted in the face of the cliffs, and Fort Macleod, just west of Lethbridge, where a museum and a reconstruction of Fort Macleod preserve the history of the North West Mounted Police, forerunners of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In Saskatchewan, in the Swift Current area, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park provides a view of Indian graves and teepee rings. In Regina, the RCMP Museum and training depot, the Museum of Natural History and the Diefenbaker Homestead House cover a wide spectrum of the province's past.

## Canadian loan to Turkey

Canada has signed an \$11.8-million loan agreement to provide short-term balance-of-payments support to Turkey.

The loan represents Canada's part of an international effort, co-ordinated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to help Turkey overcome severe economic difficulties which include a heavy balance-of-payments deficit. Following an agreement between Turkey and the International Monetary Fund on economic stabilization measures, the international community has pledged more than \$1.5 billion (U.S.) in financial support.

The Canadian contribution will serve as a line of credit for the purchase in Canada of material, machinery, equipment and services. Previous Canadian assistance to Turkey through the Canadian International Development Agency in the early 1970s included \$7-million worth of wheat and a \$9.85-million loan to help modernize and expand the country's telephone system. Canada also provided technical assistance to Turkey last year in the fields of fisheries and educational filmmaking, through the co-operation of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the National Film Board.