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PRELIMINARY REPORT

**OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTO RICO**

1926-27

To the Special Board of Trustees of the School of Tropical Medicine.

GENTLEMEN :

It is my purpose to present to you shortly after June 30 a detailed report on the activities of the school of Tropical Medicine for the fiscal year ending that date, but the arrival of Professor J. W. Jobling, as official representative of Columbia University to the School, suggests the advisability of making at this time a preliminary statement, which covers briefly certain of the more important topics that will be taken up fully in the final report.

Faculty

With three exceptions all of the staff appointed last year accepted the cargoes offered them and have cooperated splendidly to make the first year of the school a success.

The fact that nearly all of the part-time appointees served without compensation is worthy of special note and commendation.

Courses.

Fourteen courses have been given in the following subjects: Pathology (2), chemistry (2), bacteriology and mycology, immunology, clinical pathology (2), public-health administration (2), parasitology, and transmissible diseases, malaria, rural sanitation, public-health engineering, and bedside instruction. In addition there have been given weekly clinics on Saturday mornings, and scientific meetings ("seminars") on Thursday evenings, to both of which the medical public has been invited without registration or other formality.

Students.

To date there have been twenty-nine registered students, a number considerably larger, as you may recall, than we expected in the first year. Twenty-three have the degree of M. D. and the remaining six have other degrees or certificates indicating adequate prepa-

ration for the course taken. No undergraduate instruction has been offered.

Most of the students, as was anticipated, are Porto Rican physicians, who are availing themselves of the opportunity the School offers for graduate study.

As evidence of the keen interest shown by these physician-students, let me cite a single case. A prominent X-ray specialist in Ponce wished to take the course in pathology in order that he might better follow the results of X-ray treatment of tumors. This course by special arrangement was given on Saturdays beginning at eight o'clock in the morning. He gets up at 3:30 on this morning, drives eighty miles arriving at the class on time; has two hours of lecture and demonstration, works in the laboratory several hours more, and leaves at three p. m. on the return trip, arriving home at seven or eight o'clock. So pleased is he with the course that he has sent his technician to the School for training of several months and he himself plans to spend at least two days a week here during the next term. Three other students, also physicians, make trips to San Juan from points on the other side of the Island (Guayama, Humacao, and Yabueoa) to attend classes of Dr. Ortiz in public-health administration. Inquiries from the mainland and the countries including Venezuela, Colombia, Santo Domingo, Guatemala and Canada, lead us to expect next year a larger number of foreign and continental students.

Public Lectures.

During the year fifteen public lectures on subjects of general interest have been given, seven by resident lecturers and eight by visiting scientists.

Probably never before has Porto Rico had the opportunity of seeing and hearing so many distinguished scientific visitors in a single season. The list includes Dr. E. B. McKinley, Associate Professor of Bacteriology, Columbia University; Dr. E. B. Phelps, Professor of Sanitary Science, Institute of Public Health, Columbia University; Dr. Juan Iturbe, of the Faculty of Medicine, Caracas; Dr. A. W. Sellards, Associate Professor of Tropical Medicine, Harvard University; Dr. Simon Flexner, Director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York; Dr. Martha Eliot, Director of Rickets Commission of the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, and Yale University, and Dr. J. W. Jobling, Professor of Pathology, Columbia University.

The wide interest in these public lectures was shown by the large

attendance in every instance. At one of the lectures, our small auditorium which has only some sixty regular seats, was filled to overflowing by the 120 people who attended.

Routine Examinations.

It was decided at the outset that the School would not make routine tests, such as Wassermans, examination of urine, sputum, etc., for the public; first, because a routine service for these tests was already provided by the Department of Health, and, second, because the space and budget of the School was all needed for teaching and research. However, physicians were invited to send for examination, patients suffering from diseases of special interest, and those of possible value in research. Furthermore, we offered to examine histologically, autopsy and surgical specimens, such a service not being provided by the Department of Health or by any other agency on the Island.

This offer met with a prompt response from the physicians of Porto Rico, and has increased to such an extent that our space and budget are being taxed to maintain it. Fifty-five autopsies have been performed, some of them in towns some distance from San Juan, and over seven hundred surgical specimens have been sent to the school for examination by seventy-six physicians representing seventeen municipalities.

Since the usual charge for histological examinations of tissue is \$10 to \$15 on the mainland, it is seen that in less than a year this one department of the School has rendered to Porto Rico a service which has a commercial value of nearly \$10,000. At the present rate of increase this figure will be considerably exceeded next year. It is understood, of course, that no charge is made to either patient or physician for any examination.

Language.

Following the policy approved by you last year teaching has been conducted on a bilingual basis. While it is generally not practicable to give the same course in two languages at the same time, it has been found feasible to give the same course alternately in English and in Spanish, thus meeting the needs of students who speak only one language. Following this plan, Dr. Ortiz gave one of his courses the first term in English and repeated it the second term in Spanish.

Six of the public lectures were given in Spanish and nine in English. A majority of the Saturday clinics were given in Spanish, and a majority of the seminars, in English.

The School offers an exceptional opportunity to students who know well only one language to increase their proficiency in the other.

Hospital.

The School has been greatly handicapped in both teaching and research by the lack of a special hospital in immediate physical relation with the School. This handicap we hope will soon be removed, since the erection of the San Juan District Hospital, which by agreement with the Department of Health is to be placed on ground adjoining the School, is expected to begin within a short time.

It is only fair to state that during this first year the cooperation of the Department of Health (with its several special hospitals) the Presbyterian Hospital, and various physicians having private clinics or services in the Municipal Hospital, Auxilio Mutuo, Díaz García Clinic, Miramar Clinic, has been so freely given that interesting cases have not been lacking for clinics or for other occasions requiring special demonstration. Without this cooperation we should have been seriously embarrassed.

On the other hand the hospitals here, as in other medical centers, have recognized that cooperation with a teaching institution is of mutual benefit. Though the special hospital will solve our greatest need, we shall expect not only to continue but to broaden the School's affiliations with other hospitals, both in San Juan and other cities of the Island. The School has already received an invitation to this end from the "Santo Asilo de Damas" hospital of Ponce.

Research.

The School has two functions: teaching and research. While the value to Porto Rico of the teaching function will be the more quickly seen, the results being indeed already evident, it will be the research done here that will eventually show not only the largest results locally but that will carry the name of the School over the world. I do not expect that any great number of students will ever come here for study. Specialized graduate Schools never attract large numbers, but thousands of physicians and scientists working in other tropical fields will read our publication and profit by the results of investigations made here.

The energies of our staff this first year have been largely consumed in details of organization, collection of material for teaching, classes, etc. But already several papers have been finished and various others will be completed during the summer when there will be less teaching and consequently more time for research.

Two members of our staff have accepted invitations to give lectures before medical societies and universities of the United States on their investigations made here. Dr. Ashford will speak May 5th at a special meeting of the New York Academy of Medicine devoted to Tropical Medicine, and a few days later he will give an address at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University. Dr. Ortiz leaves on May 12th for New York where he will be the special guest of an association of physicians making a tour to Panama. He will deliver addresses to the party on board, and another before the Medical Society of Panama.

Research requires not only laboratory equipment, but most important of all, trained men with time for work and contemplation.

Little in the way of investigation can be expected from busy clinicians or public-health workers, fully occupied with routine duties. The School, therefore in order to fulfill its function as a research institution will need a larger number of trained workers, with time free for investigations.

With that idea in view I shall submit shortly for your approval a plan to obtain at least two young research assistants, who will dedicate themselves largely to research.

Finances.

This most important topic has been left to the last. Since a full financial statement can not be made before the end of the year, I wish at this time only to point out a few pertinent facts.

The budget for 1926-27, approved by you on June 23, 1926, amounted to \$43,840 exclusive of Columbia's contribution for the Director's salary. Since the University allotment to the School was only \$30,500 there was an anticipated deficit of \$12,980. (The income from tuition fees has been estimated at \$1,500.)

On November 1, 1926, Columbia assumed for the current year the salaries of two other professors who had come from the mainland, contributing \$5,000 to this end. This addition to our assets, together with several economies made possible by private donations, have reduced the expected deficit to about \$5,000. I have no detailed statement of Columbia's expenditures this year on account of the School but on the basis of data at my disposal I estimate the total at \$16,000 to \$17,000, including salaries and traveling expenses of three full-time professors from the mainland, traveling expenses of commission to the inauguration, and of one visiting professor, and a special appropriation of \$500 for printing of catalog, and other publications.

In addition to Columbia's own contribution there have been received through the Columbia affiliation, donations in material and in money for specific expenditures by the Director, amounting to more than \$3,000. To Columbia's credit may be added also, the services of two of her professors, Dr. McKinley and Dr. Phelps, who each spent several weeks here in giving lectures and in organizing one of our departments.

It is clear, therefore, that while the greatest value of Columbia's affiliation comes from counsel, guidance and prestige; the material assistance rendered amounting directly and indirectly to nearly \$20,000 during this first year, is of the greatest importance.

Hence we are encouraged to hope that not only will this material aid be continued but that it will be increased. Every effort is being made, I am assured by Dean Darrach and Professor Jobling, to secure additional donations for the School. It might be pointed out that contributions from wealthy Porto Ricans, which we shall hope to see soon, would strengthen Columbia's appeal to the rich of the mainland.

I am confident that you understand, as do the Columbia authorities, that an increase in income is essential, if the School is to develop as it should.

The present allotment from the University of Porto Rico, I wish to remind you in conclusion, is the same as that granted to the Institute of Tropical Medicine in 1923, with its much smaller staff and single function of research. You will agree, I am sure, that even with Columbia's aid, a larger contribution from Porto Rico for maintenance will be necessary.

This brief survey of the School's activities in its first year, I trust will give you some idea of the excellent beginning that has been made. Toward this result the splendid work of the faculty, the valuable assistance of the Department of Health, the cooperation of the medical profession, the interest of the public, have all contributed.

The Director wishes particularly to express his indebtedness to the Board of Trustees for the loyal support which they have at all times given him.

