

## BRIEF NEWS NOTES

### DR. ROBERT A. LAMBERT

The resignation of Dr. Robert A. Lambert as director of the School of Tropical Medicine of the University of Porto Rico and professor of pathology in that institution has been announced. Dr. Lambert is leaving Porto Rico to accept a post in the Rockefeller Foundation, New York, as associate director of medical education. Dr. E. B. McKinley, state director of the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation stationed at Manila has been nominated by Columbia University as Dr. Lambert's successor and is expected to arrive in San Juan early in October.

### NOTES ON THE HURRICANE

The hurricane of September 13 spared no section of the Island, and left in its wake a wide path of destruction with almost complete devastation in large areas of the central and southeastern portions.

The exact number of killed and wounded will probably never be known, but according to official records only 260 persons lost their lives. In view of the widespread destruction of buildings the fatalities seem incredibly small. Among the reasons given for the relatively low figure are (1) that the hurricane passed in the day time, (2) that it developed gradually reaching a maximum only after some twelve hours, and (3) that from previous experience the people had learned the safest places of refuge.

The medical problems left by the hurricane are many and complex. General hospitals, of which a larger service is being demanded, nearly everywhere suffered through damage to buildings and equipment. Many health services have been temporarily disorganized. With increased needs and reduced incomes, budgets for the medical work of both Municipalities and Insular Government will have to be revised. Physicians whose successful private practice depends on a prosperous clientele are left with little or no income.

But in one particular the medical situation two weeks after the storm looks more hopeful than it appeared to many physicians immediately following the catastrophe. No serious epidemics have developed and it is now considered possible that if general relief can be hastened with effective measures against hunger in the country

districts and dangerous overcrowding in the towns, the Island may pass through the crisis without any marked increase in mortality or morbidity. The increasing demand for laborers for repairs, rebuilding, and cultivation of crops indicates that the normally high percentage of unemployment may be reduced, for a time at least, thus relieving greatly the serious economic condition of the masses and indirectly reducing the health problem.

Another favorable circumstance is the preparedness of the Department of Health, which, with the cooperation of the American Red Cross, has taken extraordinary measures to meet any emergency that may arise.

#### EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

On account of conditions following the storm, the Department of Health opened on September 21 an Emergency Hospital for communicable diseases with one hundred beds in the building erected for the District Hospital of San Juan, adjoining the School of Tropical Medicine.

The resident physician in charge of the hospital is Dr. Enrique Koppisch with Dr. José Landrón as assistant resident.

The following is a list of the attending physicians:

- Dr. Bailey K. Ashford, Internal Medicine.
- Dr. José S. Belaval, Pediatrics.
- Dr. Arturo L. Carrión, Diseases of the Skin.
- Dr. M. Díaz García, Surgery.
- Dr. William R. Galbreath, Internal Medicine.
- Dr. José Rodríguez Pastor, Diseases of the Chest.
- Dr. Jenaro Suárez, Internal Medicine.
- Dr. Ramón Suárez, Pediatrics.

#### DR. A. FERNOS ISERN

Due to the cyclone which swept over Porto Rico on the 13th of this month causing terrific disaster, Dr. A. Fernós Isern, Assistant Commissioner of Health was appointed Vice Dr. Ortiz, Director of the Disaster Relief Committee of the American Red Cross on September 17th, in which capacity he has been giving his untiring service.

Up to this date and since the cyclone the work had been in charge of Mrs. Horace Mann Towner, wife of Governor Towner.

The vast amount of work already done by this committee has been greatly expedited by the unceasing efforts of Mr. Andrés Gandía, Acting Chairman of the Porto Rico Chapter and the Executive Secretary, Miss Beatriz Lassalle.

By the 22nd of September letters of credit had been issued to fifty-nine municipalities amounting to \$29,150 in all. Food had been sent to forty-one towns and clothing to thirty-one. From September 23-27 additional provisions were sent to forty-four municipalities, clothing to forty-seven and medicines to twenty-six.

The Disaster Relief Committee has been greatly assisted by the volunteer service of a large number of people to whom they are most grateful.

#### RYDER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Although Ryder Memorial Hospital of Humacao, P. R. suffered losses amounting to at least \$15,000 as a result of the recent cyclone it was able to take care of over 200 homeless people daily for over a week, and hospitalize a large number of sick and wounded.