

SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

FINLAY INSTITUTE (INSTITUTO FINLAY)*

Habana, Cuba

Director: Dr. Enrique Saladrigas y Zayas

Cuba's institute of tropical medicine was inaugurated January 17, 1927, and named in honor of her distinguished son, Dr. Carlos J. Finlay, first man to advance (1881) the theory that the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is the transmissor of yellow fever. The first Director was Dr. Domingo F. Ramos, who was succeeded in 1940 by the present head of the institution, Dr. Enrique Saladrigas y Zayas.

In addition to serving as a research center, the Institute lodges the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, has a laboratory for the manufacture of vaccines (typhoid and smallpox), and is closely associated with the "Las Animas" Hospital for contagious diseases. It is the research division of the national department of health. The annual budget amounts to 137,860.60 pesos (about \$130,000).

The Institute has an advisory Board of Directors composed of representatives of the different institutions, organizations, and national scientific societies maintaining relations with the Institute.

The Research divisions include sections on Clinical Medicine; Parasitology; Entomology; Bacteriology and Immunology; Pathologic Anatomy; Tuberculosis; Public Health Legislation; Central Committee on Eugenics and Homiculture; Hydrology; Psychology as applied to Hygiene; Epidemiology and Vital Statistics; Bromatology and Chemistry as applied to Hygiene; and Experimental Physiology.

The Institute has a library of some 12,000 volumes, with an exchange list of 150 scientific journals, and also a Museum of Tropical Medicine and Sanitation, one of the chief collections of the latter being that of mementos of Dr. Finlay.

The official organ of the Finlay Institute is *Salubridad y Asistencia Social*, which also acts as the official journal of the Ministry of Health. This journal has been published since 1909 as *Salud y Beneficencia*, and the title was changed to its present form in 1941 following the change in the name of the health department from *Secretaría de Sanidad y Beneficencia* to *Ministerio de Salubridad y Asistencia Social*.

* One of a series of papers describing the principal scientific institutions in Latin America.

Among the most important studies carried on by the Institute during its existence have been studies on: Epidemiology and pathologic anatomy of poliomyelitis; barbiturate poisoning; epidemiology, immunology and clinical history of typhoid fever, and of yellow fever and malaria; the diphtheria bacillus and clinical forms of the disease; brucellosis; intestinal parasitosis; investigations of vitamin C in the blood of typhoid fever cases.

The Finlay Institute has been undergoing a reorganization to bring its functions and facilities into closer conformity with its three principal objectives: scientific research, public health training, and maintenance of permanent cultural interchanges with national and international institutions. One of the innovations proposed as a part of the reorganization is the establishment of a School of Social Work as an annex to the School of Public Health.

CORRECTION

Use of flame-throwers.—In footnote 78 of the article on Plague in Peru (*Bol. Of. San. Pan.*, July 1941, p. 714), it was erroneously stated that the "flame-thrower" or fire-torch was first used in Brazil for the destruction of fleas in rat nests. The use of the fire torch for the destruction of fleas (and rats) in burrows and elsewhere, was originated by Traveling Representative Dr. Anthony Donovan and Senior Sanitary Engineer E. D. Hopkins, of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, in the course of their anti-plague work in Peru in cooperation with the Peruvian authorities. A description of the apparatus and method of use will appear in the October issue of the *BOLETÍN*.

Sanitation and Prevention.—"I believe that I can state, on the basis of the knowledge acquired by observation and study of the European and American nations, that any port, city, or group of individuals which has persevered in careful attention to its own hygienic conditions and has reduced its death rate to its lowest possible figure . . . may defy without fear the most aggressive infectious diseases."—GUILLERMO RAWSON, Argentina, about 1884, quoted by Aráoz Alfaro in "*Crónicas y estampas del pasado*," 1938, p. 26.

Finlay's Postulates on Yellow Fever.—"It is my personal opinion that three conditions are necessary in order that the propagation of yellow fever shall take place: (1) The presence of a previous case of yellow fever within certain limits of time counting back from the moment that we are considering; (2) The presence of a person apt to contract the disease; (3) the presence of an agent entirely independent for its existence both of the disease and of the sick man, but which is necessary in order that the disease shall be conveyed from the yellow fever patient to a healthy individual."—CARLOS FINLAY, of Cuba: "Proceedings of the International Sanitary Conference," Washington, 1881, p. 119.