

## D. K. VISWANATHAN—IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Dharmavadani Krishnier Viswanathan, Senior Regional Malaria Adviser to the Regional Office for South East Asia, died on 27 March 1960.

Dr. D. K. Viswanathan was born on 1 March 1901 in Tirunelveli (Madras State). He obtained his medical degree at the Medical College in Madras in 1923 and his Diploma in Public Health at the same school five years later. In 1937 he obtained a degree of Master of Public Health at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene, Baltimore, U.S.A. From 1943 until 1952 he held the post of Assistant Director of Public Health with the Government of Bombay State. In 1952 he became the Director of Public Health Service of the Government of Bombay, in charge of Public Health Administration, and held this post until 1956 when he joined the World Health Organization and became Senior Regional Malaria Adviser to the Regional Office for South East Asia.

Dr. Viswanathan was a Member of the Committees of the Indian Council of Medical Research, the Council of Scientific Industrial Research, the WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Malaria and a Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences.

The loss of "D.K.," as he was affectionately called, came as a brutal shock to all his friends. It is difficult to believe that this unforgettable man, whose boundless energy and brilliant intellect were so widely known, has gone forever. Malariaology has lost in Viswanathan one of its outstanding specialists, a man who has blazed a trail towards malaria eradication in India and in the world. Viswanathan's interest in malariaology dates from 1927 when he was Assistant Medical Officer in Madras. In 1935, in the capacity of Malaria Officer of the Madras Presidency, his was the task of controlling malaria over an area of 142,000 square miles with a population of 47,000,000. In this he was assisted by one entomologist and by a budget of about \$26,000!!

The DDT era in India started on 1 July 1945 in Dharwar and Kanara districts of Bombay Presidency, at Viswanathan's insistence and thanks to a small supply of the insecticide given by the Army. The success of this first trial was such that by 1949 about 6,000,000 people were under protection in Bombay State. By 1952 over 30,000,000 people were successfully protected from malaria in India and in 1955 the Indian National Malaria Control Programme came into being, only to be succeeded two years later by the organization of the present National Malaria Eradication Service which, assisted by WHO and ICA, protects a population of 390,000,000.

Although the part played by Viswanathan in the early stages of this program was limited to Bombay State alone, there is little doubt that "D.K.'s" experience, drive and extraordinary talent of persuasion contributed greatly to the success of this largest malaria eradication campaign in the world.

"D.K.'s" numerous published papers and countless letters and notes are marked by his deep understanding of the epidemiological bases of malaria, by the originality of his approach and his facility of expressing his thoughts. His book "Malaria and its Control in Bombay State," published in 1950, contains many ideas which were in advance of that time. His 1958 monograph "Conquest of malaria in India" makes delightful reading because of its liveliness and interesting historical sketches.

For the past four years Viswanathan held the post of WHO Senior Regional Malaria Adviser responsible for malaria eradication programs over an enormous area of the South-East Asia Region where 506,000,000 people were exposed to the disease. He took up and carried on this difficult job with a phenomenal energy and without sparing himself. His work as an inspired leader, careful guide and

critical judge has been outstanding and his departure has left a gap that will be difficult to fill.

Viswanathan had a double personality in which the East and West were extraordinarily blended. He was a Western man with his belief in material progress and his respect for Cartesian logic; but he was also (and even more) a devoted Brahmin Hindu, a mystic, regarding all earthly phenomena as evanescent and aspiring to the union with the Infinite.

Viswanathan was a brilliant conversationalist able to quote John Donne and the Bhagavad Gita with equal facility and fervor. He was an excellent speaker, amusedly aware of the fact that his eloquence was at times a sore trial to clock conscious chairmen. He had a noble courage of his own beliefs, and convictions and could be a formidable adversary in polemical jousts. A kind, loyal and generous friend, he is mourned by all those who knew him. Our deep sympathy goes to his wife, Lakshmi, his son and two daughters.

Nothing can show D. K. Viswanathan's personality better than an extract from his last letter written to some friends in the World Health Organization two weeks before his death.

"The medical pundits have at last declared that my condition is one of

myeloma. . . . They are exploring the possibility of my getting treatment by irradiation in India. . . . but if it is not available there is no option . . .

. . . "I have some notes and bits of news on the strategy of eradication of malaria and on our present knowledge of the epidemiology of disappearing malaria. It will not be unfitting if I present the Organization with this humble token of my last testament. I can dictate it during those moments that are available between my bouts of pain, prayer and pethidine. I am able to do this for about one hour every day; I hope to have the notes completed by the end of May but these 60 minutes a day have to be made up of at least 12 snatches of 5 minutes each, when I am physically able to concentrate my attention.

"Though not over-modest in the past, during the last few years my service with an international organization has taught me a few basic virtues like humility, patience and human understanding.

"All things must come to an end in this world. I am not worried about it. I have lived well, served well, have a good family and above all, excellent comradeship in my official work. So I am quite prepared to meet my Maker."—L. J. BRUCE-CHWATT.

## LOUIS A. STEARNS

Louis A. Stearns, 67, professor emeritus of the University of Delaware and a widely known entomologist, died on March 4 in a veterans hospital in suburban Elsmere. Mr. Stearns suffered a stroke a week ago.

Mr. Stearns' outstanding work in Delaware was as an expert in mosquito con-

trol. He developed several methods of ridding plagued areas of mosquitoes. They were so successful that many agencies outside the state used them.

Mr. Stearns retired in 1957 after 28 years as head of the university's department of entomology.—From the *Washington Post*, March 5, 1960.