

## NEWS ITEMS

*Africa, Liberia, Massateen Settlement*—Information regarding the leprosy situation in Liberia has been exceedingly meagre. According to a report in *Without the Camp* (American) the government maintains a settlement on Massateen Island, near Cape Mount, in which there are some 100 inmates. A native nurse or dresser is stationed there from a mission hospital (at Cape Mount?), these assignments being for a week at a time. It appears that the colony comprises a town center, with a "palaver house," and outlying farms.

*Australia, Kimberley*—Progress in the control of leprosy in Queensland and Western Australia was reported at the tenth session of the National Health and Medical Research Council, according to a note in *Health Journal of the Commonwealth Department of Health of Australia* (1941). A final report was presented on a survey undertaken, under a research grant, by Dr. L. A. Musso in the Kimberley division in the northwest of Western Australia. Dr. Musso covered over 15,000 miles by car, lugger, plane, and horse-back, examined some 3,600 aborigines, and reported full clinical and epidemiological records of 49 cases of leprosy found, with notes on other diseases among these natives. His full report, also covering details of cases in the leprosarium at Derby, an analysis of the leprosy situation in the area surveyed, and recommendations for the control of the disease, has been printed as an appendix to the report of this session of the Council.

*China*—In speaking at the last annual meeting of the Mission to Lepers (London), as reported in *Without the Camp*, Dr. James L. Maxwell pointed out that for at least 95 per cent of the million or so of lepers in China nothing whatever is being done, and that the situation under present conditions is particularly menacing, pointing to a great increase of the disease. The first reason for saying this is the terrible poverty that prevails. The second reason—rather different, almost the opposite—lies in the new roads that have been opened through China. The large numbers of travelers on the great Burma road and others all go through heavily infected districts.

It was suggested that the Mission might plan that in every heavily infected province there should be at least two fully organized settlements, to show what can be done for the leprosy patient. Attached to them might also be village clinics. There is need in China for a demonstration, such as has never yet been seen, of a fully organized leprosy settlement; after that, the speaker believed, the authorities could be induced to undertake such activities. There are, happily, two centers where the staff for such work can be trained, but careful planning is needed before anything practical can be done.

*India, The Lady Willingdon Leprosy Sanatorium*—The change of name of this institution (formerly Leper Settlement) reflects a change of policy

under which, according to a summary statement prepared for the Mission to Lepers by Dr. T. B. M. Sloan, acting chief medical officer, admission is being increasingly limited to early lepromatous cases. The purpose is to make the institution more a true sanatorium for early, treatable patients than a resthouse for chronic ones. L1 cases constituted 65 per cent of the total of 98 new admissions in the first six months of this year, and 72 per cent of the adult males admitted. Increasing numbers are being discharged on certificate, and the number of chronic "burned-out" cases has dwindled to only 7. Of a total of 219 cases under hydnicarpus treatment, 68 per cent show improvement, 55 (24 per cent) having become negative in the year ending June 30, 1941. During that period there were 103 discharges of all types.

*Japan, Nationalization of the Prefectural Leprosaria*—It was decided early this year that the five original official leprosaria in Japan, each maintained by a group of prefectures, should be nationalized and supported by the central government. These institutions, Zensei, near Tokyo, Hokubu, near Aomori, Oshima, on the island of that name, Komyo-en, replacing the storm-destroyed Sotajima leprosarium at Osaka, and Kyushyu, in Kumamoto, are not to rank with the national ones that have been established since 1930, Aisei-en, at Nagashima, Rakusei-en, at Kusatsu, Keiai-en, in Kagoshima, and Shinsei-en, recently built near Sendai. These, together with two small ones in Okinawa, make a total of eleven official leprosaria. There are now only five private asylums (see abstract of report by S. C. Oltmans, page 143).

*Gotemba*—Rev. Fr. X. Iwashita, for some years in charge of the Fukusei Byo-in, a private Catholic leprosarium near Gotemba, Japan, died in September, 1940, after a brief illness, it is learned from the annual report of the Secretary for Japan of the American Mission to Lepers. The new director is Rev. Fr. Oki Chiba.

*Philippines*—Referring to an article published in an American magazine and reprinted in the *Philippines Free Press*, in which it was stated that there is a connection between the eating of gabi (colocasia taro) and leprosy, the latter periodical has more recently made record of a contrary opinion. The idea naturally caused some concern among agriculturists. The director of health is quoted as informing the director of plant industry "that as far as this office is concerned, the [idea] may be safely disregarded. Therefore, the production of gabi in large quantities in connection with the food intensification program of your bureau should be encouraged." As a result of this assurance the bureau of plant industry is encouraging the planting of gabi on a large scale. Gabi is considered to be a good substitute for Irish potatoes.

*South America, Brazil, Maranhão*—The leprosy control service of the state has finished the first general count of lepers, begun in 1939. The bulk of the work was done by two traveling physicians and the central clinic at St. Luiz, the capital. There were recorded 1,211 cases, giving the rate of 1.02 per 1,000 in a total population of 1,190,141. Age and sex distribution: adult males, 836 (68 per cent); adult females, 375 (31 per cent); children, 70 (31 per cent). Nine-tenths (1,095) were born in the state. Type distribution: lepromatous, 287 (24 per cent); mixed, 214 (18 per

cent; neural, 615 (51 per cent); suspicious, 95 (7.8 per cent). In the 65 counties the incidence is nil in six, up to 1.0 per 1,000 in 37, 1-2 in 10, 2-3.5 in 11, and 5.8 in 1 (Anajatuba). Out of the 59 infected counties, 48 have a majority of closed cases, whereas in 11 counties open cases predominate. There are only 183 lepers isolated in the Colonia de Bomfin.—H.C. de S.A.

*Venezuela*—On December 31, 1940, there were 619 lepers in the Cabo Blanco leprosarium and 729 at Isla de Providencia, total 1,348, of whom 925 were males and 423 females. During the year 78 were discharged as "socially cured" from Cabo Blanco and 48 from Isla de Providencia. The rate of mortality for all cases was 5.6 per cent in Cabo Blanco and 3.6 per cent in Isla de Providencia. The Social Service for Leprosy has made an efficient preventive campaign for the children of leprous parents and in the examination of suspects. — [From *Bol. Of. Sanit. Panamericana* 20 (1941) 1003-1004.]