

## THE "BRIEF REPORTS" SECTION

The number of replies received in response to the circular letter sent out early in July, asking for opinions as to the desirability of inaugurating a new section for brief reports of cases and other observations, indicates real interest in the matter on the part of a considerable number of the members of the International Leprosy Association. The opinions submitted have not been quite unanimously in favor of the proposition, but they are almost that. Two men, both clinical professors in medical schools—one in the Far East and the other in the eastern portion of the United States—voted adversely. One, discussing the matter, expressed the opinion that the number of the JOURNAL'S readers who find difficulty with the matter that appears in its pages has probably been exaggerated. The other simply states:

. . . I do not believe that the Journal of the International Leprosy Association is the place for the 'practical' sort of article. I think this sort of article should go into a more general journal which would come to the attention of the medical practitioner.

All of the numerous other replies received approve the proposal. A few of them may be quoted; they are representative though they are chosen only because they are the most recently received. One man, a lone worker in charge of a leprosarium in Africa, says:

My opinion coincides with that of the officer of the Association quoted, i.e., that the JOURNAL is stiff reading for the majority of people occupied in leprosy work, many of whom are not qualified medical men at all.

The head of a medical service of one of the countries of Central Africa writes:

. . . I have discussed the question with some of my leprosy officers and we are in full agreement that a section for clinical reports would be a valuable addition. One of these doctors remarked that while he had always found the JOURNAL most interesting reading, he did not feel that it had been of much help to him in his clinical work.

A clinical-laboratory worker in tropical America points out that:

. . . It is a fact that most leprologists are not research workers, but are doing practical work . . . and for them it will be indispensable to have a practical section. It will be very easy for the research workers and specialists to contribute to it small articles that will be really helpful to the field worker, and these practical workers will also have an opportunity to publish their own obser-

vations in an unpretentious form, so that they need not hesitate to publish them because of fear that they are not sufficiently scientific.

Two or three of our correspondents have added a further suggestion, which is expressed by one of them in the following:

I think the suggestion to run a case report section excellent, but I hope that the section will include not only the reports but also comments on them by experts. It seems to me probable that such comments would do much to encourage correspondence on details, and lead to helpful comparisons of different individuals' observations.

The response to the inquiry has been so overwhelmingly in favor of the proposed new department that the Editorial Board has no alternative but to inaugurate it. This is done in the present issue, under a heading more inclusive than "Case Reports" and in line with the "Kurze Mitteilungen" departments of some German periodicals, and with three articles that are fairly representative of what the section is designed for. It is hoped that it will not detract from the value of the JOURNAL in the eyes of those who have not been in favor of it, and that it will prove of real value to those who approved it. Whether it will be continued, and if so whether it will appear regularly in every issue, will depend entirely upon those for whose benefit it is designed. It is hoped that it will be instrumental in bringing forth interesting and valuable observations that would otherwise not be recorded and that these may be stimulative of helpful discussions.