

The Work of the Association.

The British Empire Leprosy Relief Association was constituted in the autumn of 1923, and has as its object the ridding of the Empire of leprosy. The Committee of the Association believes that if this object is to be achieved it needs the co-operation of Government in India and the Colonies and Protectorates, the Missionary bodies carrying on work in those territories, the commercial community and the natives of the various countries. In order to secure such co-operation the Association, which is a voluntary body, has done all that is possible to secure the formation of branches of the Association in each part of the Empire where lepers are to be found. Each branch of the Association is responsible for the work in its own area, but the Association seeks to aid in every way possible by frequently, sending out the latest information on the treatment of the disease providing the latest drugs for treating leprosy, and by making grants of money for buildings. The Committee of the Association feels strongly that it is only by the co-operation of all those who can do anything in the matter that the best results will be obtained, and if **representatives** of the four classes mentioned are represented on the Committees of the local branches it means that there will be consultation as to the amount of work that needs to be undertaken, and division of the work to be done so as to prevent overlapping.

Such branches of the Association have already been formed in India, Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Malta, Barbados and British Guiana. In Nigeria and the Gold Coast the Governors have appointed whole time medical men as Hon. Secretaries of the respective local branches, and they will devote all their time to developing leprosy work in these colonies. In India a doctor has been appointed as Research Worker in connection with the Indian Council, as the branch in India has been called by the Viceroy. The question of the formation of other branches of the Association is receiving attention in both Kenya and Tanganyika, and the Committee of the Association feel that it would be helpful if a branch of the Association could be formed in every part of the Empire where lepers are found. There is no idea of the local branches being controlled from the Head Office of the Association, as the Association only exists to be of service to those who are carrying on the work.

In considering what ought to be the best policy to be carried out, the important fact to keep in mind is that our object in view is to eradicate the disease altogether. Sir Leonard Rogers in the

Foreword to " Leprosy in India " says :—

The organisation of the great humanitarian work of caring for the leper, which is so largely in the hands of Christian missions of various denominations, requires to be remodelled in the light of the new situation, for it is evident that a far greater service is rendered by curing the leper in the early stages of the disease, than in providing a home for him after the affection has reduced him to a helpless wreck.

It is therefore considered that the best method to be employed is the establishment of Treatment Centres in all districts where there are any considerable numbers of lepers, and that efforts should be directed towards attracting the lepers to come forward voluntarily and take treatment. If the early cases can be treated they will most probably recover, and thus will be prevented from spreading the infection to others. There are already a considerable number of these Treatment Centres in existence, and the Association has made financial grants to eighteen different places in British colonies in Africa, for the enlargement of existing Treatment Centres, or the establishment of others where needed. In every case a qualified medical man is either in charge, or has the supervision of the work which is carried on by a qualified nurse.

The Committee of the Association will gladly consider any request for grants of money for the erection of buildings, such as a dispensary for the treatment of lepers, and the provision of simple accommodation for lepers who come to a Treatment Centre for regular treatment, from anyone who is willing to undertake leprosy work, and would consider giving financial grants for Government schemes if the entire funds for such schemes were not available locally. The Association will also provide the drugs, etc., that are needed for the treatment of lepers, and any applications for these will receive immediate attention if sent to the Secretary.

F. O.