

Work in the Gold Coast Colony.

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There are at present in the Gold Coast three Leper Asylums.

At Accra, the capital, there is a small asylum on the sea shore. This asylum contains some 46 inmates, mostly in the later stages of the disease, undergoing treatment.

It is hoped shortly to start an out-patient Clinic for those cases in the early stages of the disease, in conjunction with the asylum, and thus to attract cases to come forward for treatment.

At Ho, in Togoland, 104 miles north-east of Accra, there is situated the largest asylum in the Colony, commenced by Dr. F. H. Cooke in September, 1926. This asylum has at present over 150 in-patients, and is surrounded by huts built by some 250 out-patients, who have been attracted by the success of the treatment, and the hope it holds out.

The Government have under construction a new and larger settlement, about a mile away, part of which is already occupied by cases transferred from the old settlement, while additional accommodation, together with hospital and administrative buildings, is in process of erection.

A survey carried out of villages within an area of 50 miles of the asylum, showed few lepers, the majority already being at Ho undergoing treatment, or awaiting admission, as soon as the new accommodation is available.

The area surveyed has a population of approximately 100,000, and from the number of lepers seen in the asylum, and during the course of the survey, the leprosy rate of this area would be about seven per mille.

Of the cases seen in the asylum, 80 per cent. were of the "anæsthetic type," and the greater number of these of the "early anæsthetic type," so the outlook for treatment in this area is hopeful.

At Yendi, situated 500 miles by road north of Accra, there is an asylum started by Dr. Helen Hendrie, with the help of the Government. There are about 60 lepers, and fresh cases are coming for treatment.

It is hoped to start out-patient clinics at all stations where there are medical officers resident. This should attract fresh cases to come forward for treatment, and also assist in the Leprosy Survey of the Colony, which is at present being carried out.

The survey will give some idea of the prevalence of leprosy, and also give some indication of the number of new settlements required, as an extension to the present accommodation, for those cases in the more infectious stages of the disease.

The out-patient clinic for early cases, and the settlement for those cases which are in the infectious stages of the disease will be the foundation of the scheme, patients being attracted in the first instance by the survey, and the out-patient clinics.

It is considered that compulsion in any shape or form will do more harm than good at this early stage, and would lead to the hiding of cases.

The Medical Officer carrying out the survey does a little general medical work first, in each area, to gain the confidence of the people in that area, otherwise suspicions may be aroused, in the more primitive areas, and lepers may hide themselves in the bush.

A travelling dispensary, a suggestion of the Director of Medical and Sanitary Services, has been found a most useful way of carrying out the survey work.