

Parliament and the Work of the Association.

In the House of Commons on March 25th, 1929, Sir Robert Thomas asked the Under-Secretary of State for India approximately the present number of lepers in India ; how many treatment centres are now open ; to what extent those centres are State supported as regards initial establishment, maintenance and payment of their medical staffs ; and whether The British Empire Leprosy Relief Association receives any financial aid from public funds ?

The Under-Secretary of State for India (Earl Winterton) : The number of persons in India returned as lepers at the census of 1921, the last official figures available, was 102,513, but it is probable that the number of lepers in India is considerably in excess of that returned. Information is not available as to the number of treatment centres now open in India. With regard to the remainder of the question, as public health is a transferred Provincial subject, the matter is one for the local governments and legislative councils. The Indian Council of The British Empire Leprosy Relief Association work in co-operation with the Provincial Governments and voluntary agencies and in each Province the local governments either support the leper institution or make a capitation grant to the institutions under the administration of the Mission to Lepers.

Sir R. Thomas : Is the Noble Lord aware that there are more lepers under the British flag than under any other flag ?

Earl Winterton : That is exceedingly probable, in view of the fact that one-fifth of the whole population of the world is under the British flag.

Mr. Day : Is it not the fact that the latest remedy for leprosy is greatly alleviating that disease ?

Earl Winterton : Yes, I believe that is so. My noble friend has a very distinguished medical adviser at the India Office, who was closely associated with the discovery of that particular remedy.