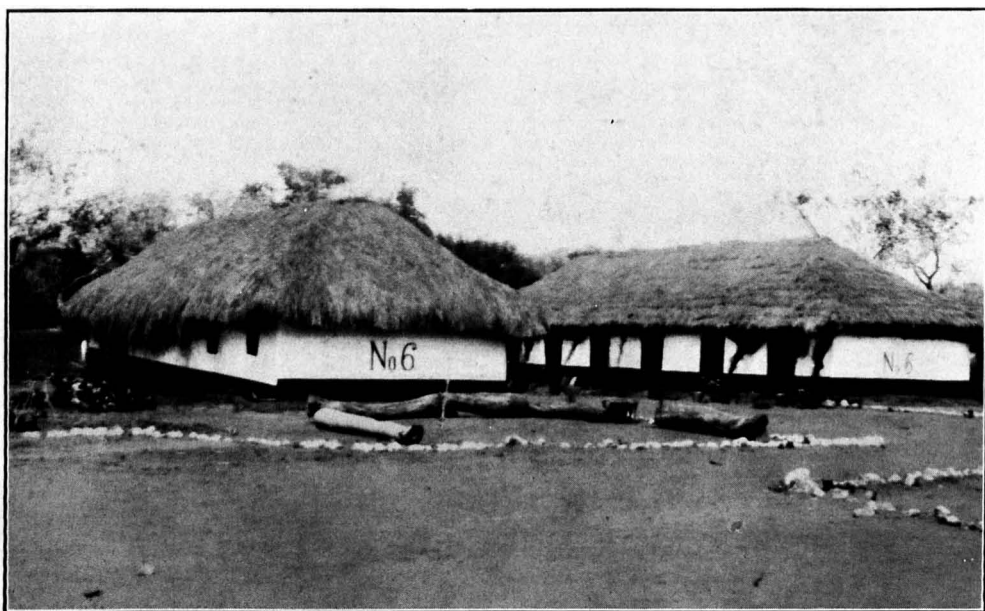


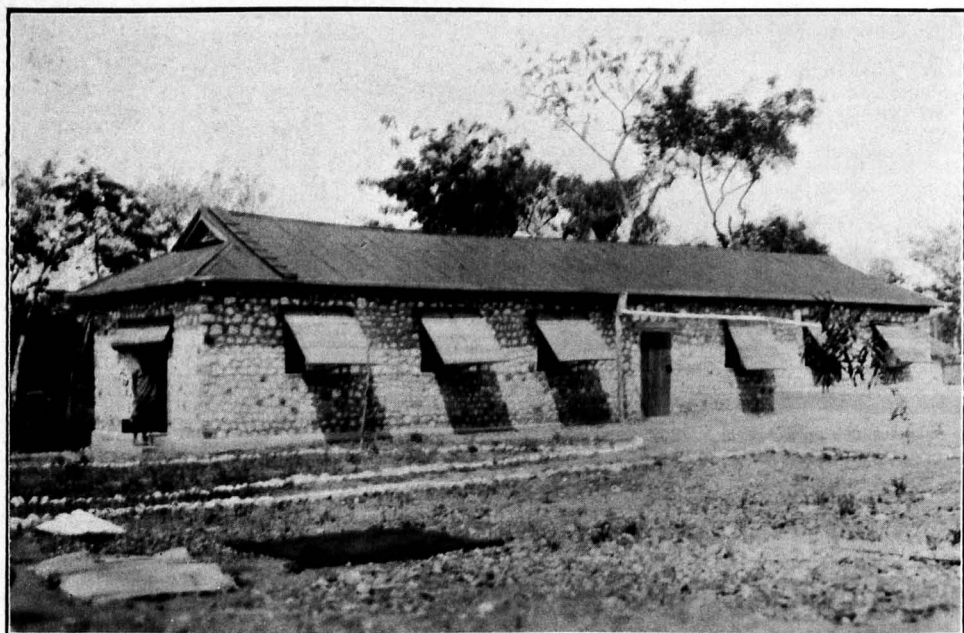
## History of the Ho Leper Settlement.

F. H. COOKE.

I CLAIM no credit for the foundation of this settlement. The people themselves, more or less, forced my hands, by flocking into Ho for treatment. I will warrant, that any medical officer in any district in the Gold Coast, if he went to the trouble of having huts erected in his area and treated lepers, he would soon find himself in the position I was in, in 1926, for the modern treatment of leprosy, especially in the early cases, undoubtedly paves the way for cure. The people of this colony are not averse to the method of treatment, but they are averse to any system of "lock up." I have heard it said, by a medical man, that the segregation and treatment of leprosy is not as important as tuberculosis. With the African, a cough is just a cough, which he treats with native medicines until a time comes when he cannot get any relief and loses his night's rest. At this stage he consults the medical officer, who diagnosis tubercular disease of the lungs, but, bear this in mind, at this stage his case is hopeless, there is not the smallest chance of his recovery, and he dies within two years. If he is a leper, he knows it at once, he has no doubt about it, and if he can get a room to stay in near his medical officer, he will stay, take his treatment and very possibly be cured. If he cannot be housed and treated, he will linger on for a number of years, a source of danger to anyone coming in contact with him. One is a source of danger for two years, the other may be for 30 years—which is the greater evil? Furthermore, leprosy is no respecter of age, there are many affected children living in the settlement from three years to twelve years old. Are these to be neglected because tuberculosis is "more important?" In the early months of the year 1926, four or five lepers were attending the out-patient department at the Hospital, Ho, for intramuscular injection of moogrol. After a month or so, these lepers had derived some benefit and apparently spread the news to their folks in the areas they came from, as more lepers came in for treatment. During this period, they resided within the villages of Ho, and naturally the chiefs were none too pleased. Out of pure necessity I had a hut of five rooms erected outside the hospital compound as a residence for these lepers. As time went on, the influx of lepers kept increasing, and to house them more huts were erected, until the area became very congested, the majority living in small huts erected by themselves.



LEPERS' HOUSES.



THE HOSPITAL.



SOME OF THE 480 LEPER INMATES.



A COMPOUND.

It was perfectly obvious that something definite had to be done for these people, so a permanent settlement on a suitable site was the natural consequence. Land was acquired  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles east of Ho, and the first foundations were laid in June, 1927. The types of building which appeared to be most suitable were swish-built houses, consisting of six rooms to each house, with grass roofs, and laid out in compounds of four houses each, the kitchen being in the centre of the compound. As a compound was completed it was occupied. By December 31st, 1928, three compounds were occupied, the rest of the lepers were moved over to the permanent site, put into temporary huts, and the old site was destroyed by fire. Building progressed steadily, and on March 31st, 1930, all the compounds, eleven in all, were occupied by 436 lepers. Compounds Nos. 6 to 9 are not in compound shape, but the huts are placed in line, two huts facing two huts—this alteration in design was made with the idea of improving the appearance of the general layout. Besides these compounds the following permanent buildings of stone and cement were built, *viz.*, (1) the office building, consisting of a store, office, dispensary and waiting shed ; (2) a hospital of two wards, each 29 feet by 18 feet, with a store room between 18 feet by 18 feet. This building has, like the office building, a concrete floor, but in addition, has a ceiling of bever boards. Between the offices and hospital, is a reinforced concrete tank holding 12,500 gallons of water. On the north side of the offices is a market shed 34 feet by 16 feet, on the south side a smaller shed for the shoemakers and wood carvers, on the south-east side is a fine carpenter's shop and above this a shed 50 feet for weavers. All these sheds are permanent, being floored with concrete, and covered with corrugated iron sheets, except the weaving shed, which has an earthen floor. The Superintendent's house is on the eastern boundary of the settlement, and is also a permanent building. South-east of the settlement, and on the other side of the main road, two houses have been built as Rest Houses, for the parents of those lepers who are unable to fend for themselves.

The inmates are, with a few exceptions, natives of British Togoland and that area of the Gold Coast Colony lying east of the Volta River, and accommodation is only available for these people.

They are allowed a maintenance allowance of 6d. a day, but in the month of March, 1930, this allowance was reduced to 3s. for every eight days, thereby allowing every inmate to receive a share. A large area of new land, about

70 acres, has been plotted out for farming purposes, each compound is allocated a certain area, depending on the fitness of the inmates. The produce reaped is sold to the inmates of the settlement, and after deducting the cost of seeds and seedlings, the balance will be returned to general revenue against the vote for maintenance allowance. It is therefore hoped, that in the future, the settlement will be more or less self-supporting. Of the trades, weaving, carpentry, shoe-making and wood carving are carried on and encouraged—of the weavers, they are nine in all, two weave excellent Keta cloth. The cloths are thoroughly sterilised before they are sold. Monies obtained from the sale of these trades are, after deducting cost of material, put into general fund for the benefit of the inmates.

*Discipline.*—The superintendent is directly responsible for the general behaviour of the inmates, but there is also a system of Headmen. Each compound has a headman, who is responsible for the cleanliness and order of his compound. So also with the women, they have a headwoman or Djipola, and over all is the headman or Amega of the settlement who controls all the labour. He is elected to position by the inmates, and with the compound headmen hears all complaints and adjust any differences that may arise, reporting to the medical officer and superintendent whatever decision he arrives at. I have never interfered with any of his findings, as in every case both sides have abided by his decision.

#### SUMMARY FOR YEAR 1929-30.

Remaining on 31/3/29 .. .. .	418
Admitted during year 1929-30 .. .. .	169
Discharged cured .. .. .	22
Discharged on Parole .. .. .	50
Died .. .. .	5
Ran away .. .. .	11
Remaining on 31/3/30 .. .. .	499
On maintenance allowance .. .. .	436
Out-patients (not on maintenance but residing in temporary huts within the settlement) .. .. .	63

*Anticipation.*—Is this to be the only settlement on a large scale in the Gold Coast? The present one, is only for those Africans residing east of the Volta River, but within this settlement are natives of Accra, Winneba, Sohun, Kwahu, Kumasi, and Ada. If the Government at any future date considers the advisability of founding another such settlement, these inmates could form a nucleus.

There is no doubt in my mind that very many lepers in the early stages of the disease wander over the countryside undetected, and as a result of partial civilisation and our protection are a grave menace to the rest of the community.

I have good grounds for making this statement. Before the advent of the white man into this country, a leper, in the early stages, was compulsorily segregated by his own people, but nowadays, they have developed a spirit of independence, that allows them to wander unmolested from place to place.