

Proceedings of Meeting of General Committee.

A MEETING of the General Committee was held at the India Office, London, on April 20th, 1933. Owing to the death of Lord Chelmsford, the chair was taken by Sir Edward Gait, the Chairman of the Executive Committee.

Sir Edward Gait expressed on behalf of the members of the Committee their sorrow at the death of Lord Chelmsford, and then proceeded to outline the work of the Association during the past ten years. He said that when the Association was founded in 1924 an appeal was made for a fund of a quarter of a million pounds. The response to that appeal in this country had been extremely disappointing, and in no year had the Association realised more than £8,800, the total amount received to date being only £51,000. In India, however, under the auspices of the then Viceroy (Lord Reading), an independent branch of the Association was formed in 1925, and a local appeal for funds realised roughly £150,000. Valuable research work had been carried out under Dr. Muir at the School of Tropical Medicine, surveys had been made and doctors had been trained. Work in other parts of the Empire had been hampered by lack of financial resources, but a great deal of useful work had been done. With the active encouragement of the Colonial Office the interest of local governments had been aroused, and whole-time leprosy officers had been appointed, surveys carried out and treatment centres established. Unfortunately, owing to the world-wide economic crisis, the services of the whole-time leprosy officers in Nigeria and the Gold Coast had had to be dispensed with. In the past year three-quarters of a million doses of drugs had been distributed, and grants had been made for the erection of dispensaries and huts for patients. The Association has recently arranged to pay the salary of a whole-time leprosy officer in Zanzibar for a minimum of five years, in the hope of thus providing an object lesson showing that leprosy can be exterminated if adequate measures are taken.

After the Hon. Treasurer had presented a statement of the accounts for the year 1932, Sir Leonard Rogers gave a brief address on the medical side of the Association's work. He said that he thought that the work which the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association had accomplished with its slender resources, within a single decade, could rarely have been equalled. In 1915-17, the value of the use of in-

jections of soluble forms of the active principles of chaulmoogra and hydnocarpus oils was established, and this form of treatment had now passed the realms of controversy, as *The Lancet* had recently pronounced in a leading article, based on the Association's last annual report, that "the results speak for it without contradiction." The best means, in his opinion, of reducing leprosy, lay in the examination of contacts of all leprosy cases repeatedly for 10 years, so as to detect early cases of the disease. The speaker referred to the rapid control of the epidemic of leprosy in Nauru Island, where 30 people were found to be infected. Three years later it was reported that the number of cases showing signs of leprosy had been reduced by 40 per cent., and no case had gone on to the advanced stage. A year later the epidemic was under control.

Sir Leonard next referred to the work that had been carried out in the Sudan. Here the problem was a difficult one, for a survey of the scattered population in the infected area revealed 6,500 cases, or over 5 per cent. of the population. Thirty square miles of land had been taken for a large leprosy colony for 4,800 cases, the majority of which were in the infective stage, and were mostly early cases. The patients grew their own crops and the colony was largely self-supporting. A recent report showed that within the last year no less than 2,230 cases have been discharged free from all signs of the disease. This shows the necessity for dealing with the cases in the early stage of the disease. In the Philippine Islands it had been found necessary to modify the existing system, because under the old rigid method of compulsory segregation it had been found impossible to reach the early cases, and the average period before patients were discovered or isolated was eight years. During this period they were capable of infecting others.

The Association, Sir Leonard stated, had just sent an experienced leprologist, Dr. T. B. Welch, to tackle the leprosy problem among the 200,000 people in Zanzibar, on the lines so successful in Nauru.

Sir Leonard reviewed the position in British Guiana, emphasising the fact that as a result of a suggestion from the Association the Government of British Guiana were permitting early non-infective cases to be treated as out-patients in dispensaries erected by the Association. He further stated that as a result of the policy in British Guiana more than half the cases in the leprosy hospital were now voluntary admissions. These were attracted by improved treatment, and the number of discharges had risen to 128,

with only 4.7 per cent. of relapses, while 73.5 per cent. of all cases show improvement. It is significant that Dutch Guiana has adopted the same system, and has instituted a regular examination of all school children. This has been proved the most efficient way of finding out slight or early cases of leprosy.

The Rev. P. B. Clayton, Founder Padre of Toc H, was present at the meeting by special invitation. Mr. Clayton had recently visited West Africa and had come into touch with leprosy work. As a result of what he saw he felt that non-medical men could be of assistance in leprosy colonies, and he detailed a scheme whereby such help might be of value in the leprosy campaign.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Clayton for his remarks, and said that these would receive the close attention of the Executive Committee.

The members of the General Committee present were :— Sir Edward Gait (in the Chair), Sir Frank Carter, Sir Leonard Rogers, Lord Lugard, Dr. A. E. Horn, Dr. T. Jays, Dr. Christopherson, Dr. Henry Fowler, Mr. B. F. Wright, representing the High Commissioner for Southern Rhodesia ; Mr. L. F. Honey, representing the High Commissioner for South Africa ; and Mr. F. W. Ross. Apologies for absence were received from Lord Reading, Sir John Rose Bradford, Lady Barnes, Sir A. C. Chatterjee, Dr. Thomas Cochrane, Dr. A. T. Stanton, Sir Francis Fremantle, Mr. F. H. Brown and Dr. Hugh Stannus.