

NEWS.

FRANCE.

In the 1954 session of the National Assembly of France a resolution was tabled and, we are informed, passed, proposing the laying down through the United Nations Organisation of an international statute for leprosy patients, establishing their rights as human beings. A copy of this resolution which has reached us is accompanied by a copy of the speech supporting it, which states how a Frenchman, M. Raoul Follereau, has studied the matter for ten years in all parts of the world and is appalled by the denial of human rights to those with leprosy which he has found. The United Nations Charter, Article 13, proclaiming to all the enjoyment of the rights and fundamental liberties of man, and the Dumbarton Oaks statement to the same effect, are quoted, and the exclusion of those with leprosy from these rights is denounced. The speech states that leprosy is a disease like any other, and much less serious and much less contagious than some, tuberculosis for example; that the disease is now held in check by treatment, and that within 50 years it may be completely conquered; that there are at least ten or twelve million persons with leprosy in the world living under physical and social handicaps of great severity, often quite unnecessarily. The speech proposes that a declaration of the United Nations should solemnly proclaim that the maintenance of leprosy prisons is unworthy of nations claiming to be civilised, that the United Nations Organisation should recommend the closure of such leprosy institutions and their transformation into sanatoria for the proper treatment, care, and ultimate discharge of the patients, with return to their employment and social life with no discrimina-

tion, and that the Assembly of the United Nations Organisation shall recommend to all member countries that a census of patients with leprosy shall be made by a specially appointed staff, and shall solemnly proclaim that these patients are under the common law and protected by it, and that they shall be guaranteed their liberty as soon as responsible doctors declare them not infectious, and that they shall be given the same facilities, advantages and privileges as all other citizens, without exception.

NYASALAND.

The following is a quotation from the Annual Report of the Medical Department of the Nyasaland Protectorate for the year 1952:

“ At Kocira, the site for the proposed Central Government Leprosarium, work proceeded on little more than a care and maintenance basis, again owing to the restriction of the capital programme. However, much preliminary work was done under the direction of the BELRA Supervisor. Clearing of the estate, brick and tile making, and the establishment of a herd of cattle preparatory to the development of mixed farming, went ahead as far as the limited funds permitted.

“ The issue of sulphones to Government subsidized Mission Leprosy Institutions continued, and adequate supplies were issued for the treatment of all in-patients and a limited number of out-patients. The visit of Dr. R. G. Cochrane, Medical Secretary of BELRA, already referred to, was an encouragement both to the Missions visited and to the Government staff concerned with the expansion of leprosy control measures.

“ The creation of the Brown Memorial Fund during the year was an item of considerable importance to leprosy control in Nyasaland. The late Mrs. M. H. D. Brown and Miss M. A. Brown, formerly tea planters in the Mlanje District, bequeathed their residuary estate ‘ for the benefit of the lepers of Nyasaland ’. After protracted legal proceedings over the validity of the will, the High Court ruled that the Brown Memorial Fund should be established, vested in a Board of Trustees consisting of eight persons of whom three are to be *ex-officio*, namely the Director of Medical Services, the Accountant-General and the Administrator General; five other representative trustees were to be appointed, one by the Governor in Council, one by the Christian Council of Nyasaland, one by the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Nyasaland, one by the African Protectorate Council and one by the Nyasaland Branch of the British Red Cross Society.

“ The objects of the Fund, which totals some £232,000, are to make grants and periodical payments, as the Trustees think fit, towards the development and upkeep of institutions providing treatment for Nyasaland lepers; provision is also made for the support of leprosy research work in Nyasaland.

“ A preliminary meeting of the Trustees was held on the 10th December, 1952, and the fully constituted Board of Trustees is to start work early in 1953.”