

REPORTS

Report of the Medical and Health Department, Malta, 1953.

The introduction to this report, written by the Chief Government Medical Officer, has a long section dealing with the history of leprosy stating how in 1695 a commission was appointed for the care of leprosy patients, and how in 1900 all male patients were segregated, and in 1912 all known female patients. The Report goes on: "In view of the modern knowledge of leprosy, countries have revised their laws against lepers. The present trend in dealing with leper patients does not seem to favour compulsory isolation. Forcible segregation has been tried in many countries, but it has given poor results. In various countries the laws regarding leprosy are being revised, and this procedure has been followed this year in Malta, and compulsory segregation has been abolished." In the body of the report it is stated that eleven new cases were notified during the year mostly in the 20—40 age group. In the Leprosy Hospital (St. Bartholomew's Hospital) there were 103 patients at the beginning of the year. Six new ones were admitted and 31 were discharged at their own request on the abolition of compulsory segregation, in most of these the disease having been arrested. At the end of the year the number of patients in the hospital was 75, 54 being males and 21 females. Sulphone treatment is being used with good effect, and experiments with other forms of treatment are also being made. Four deaths occurred during the year, two from chronic heart disease and two from chronic nephritis.