

REPORTS

East African Leprosy Research Centre.

The East African Leprosy Research Centre is a concept of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association and has been largely financed by them with the added backing of the three East African territories, and has come into being through the co-operation of the East Africa High Commission, who also administer the Centre as one of the Non-self-contained Services. The centre is situated on the territorial boundary between Uganda and Kenya, near to Busia and Tororo, and with the agreement of the Kenya Government is sited at the Itesio Leprosarium. This leprosarium is planned to accommodate 1,000 in-patients when all buildings are completed, and from Itesio, the Church Missionary Society Leprosarium at Kumi, and the Roman Catholic Missionary Leprosarium at Buluba, are within easy reach. It is thus well situated as regards wealth of clinical material. The heavy leprosy incidence of 25 to 35 per thousand of Nyanza Province of Kenya and Eastern Province of Uganda should also be noted.

The objects of the Centre are, briefly, to conduct leprosy research of a practical and basic nature in East Africa.

The following draft proposals for research projects have been made:—

- (a) *Bacteriological.* The techniques of Hanks and Clarke Gray in the hydrogen transfer capacity of the mycobacteria of rats, should be tested out on human mycobacteria of leprosy, and the special staining methods now being perfected by Hanks be given a thorough test in all types of clinical leprosy of East Africa.

If these methods stand the test, an extensive study of *M. leprae* obtained from all places in East Africa should be undertaken. The methods which claim to ascertain the viability and infectiousness of these mycobacteria should obviously be applied widely in the hope of advancing our study of the specific germ by these relatively simple methods.

- (b) *Immunological.* A long-term test of the claimed protective action of BCG against human leprosy should be planned and set going. A mobile laboratory is possessed by the Centre, and the district or districts where such a trial can be carried out lies at the door of the Itesio Leprosarium, wherein the Centre is sited.
- (c) *Therapeutic.* No specific project has been as yet chosen, but a suggestion is that investigation be made into retarded absorption therapy, which has a great practical advantage, if proved that the absorption is steady, harmless and efficient, in the control of large numbers in countries of high leprosy prevalence.

It is intended also to conduct carefully controlled therapeutic trials of new drugs which are known to be effective against tuberculosis, for example, or which are equally effective against other mycobacteria.