

eighteen months or two years. They are to report in three months' time to be tested again.

Fresh air, sunshine, clean and happy surroundings, and adequate employment have much to do with the curing of lepers. The last is not easy to arrange for on a small piece of ground, but these lepers have hoed every available bit of soil, and planted cassava, beans, ground-nuts, pumpkins and tomatoes in the wet season. They also have a small canoe and a fishing-net, but at present they are deterred from doing much fishing by an enormous crocodile that will bask on their rocks, and is never there when anyone goes over with a rifle to try to shoot it.

One man has learnt to read and write—of course, his own Bantu dialect—in less than a year, taught by one of the lepers who acts as leader and head of the little band.

It is important in the early days of a leper's treatment to eliminate other diseases; they nearly all have ankylostomiasis, bilharzia, or tertiary yaws; some have all three. The fact that some have now returned to their homes and families, well and happy, is encouraging others to come forward and ask to be taken into the little settlement at Likoma.

The original mud huts have now been replaced by buildings of sun-dried brick; each patient has his or her own little room, and there is a good verandah for their common use. There is one block for the men and one for the women about five minutes' walk apart; the path between them skirts the lake and has a lovely view. A little house of Prayer and Praise is the witness that the language of the Good Samaritan has borne practical fruit.

NURSING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Midwives' Acts (Departmental Committee).

In the House of Commons on November 22nd, Mr. KELLY (Rochdale) asked the Minister of Health whether, in view of the fact that many registered nurses hold also the qualification of certified midwife, he will state the reason why the profession of nursing has been refused representation upon the Departmental Committee appointed to consider the working of the Midwives Acts, 1902 to 1926; and whether any organisation of nurses has declined to give evidence before that body because of that refusal?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: I did not consider it necessary to appoint a registered nurse on this committee as it was open to the various nursing organisations to give evidence before the committee. I am glad to say that only one of these organisations declined to avail themselves of this opportunity.

Mr. KELLY: Can the right hon. Gentleman state his reason for refusing representation?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: I have given that in the answer.

We do not agree that the Minister of Health has answered the question put by Mr. Kelly. Medical practitioners, midwives, and members of the public have been given representation on the Committee. Why should not a Registered Nurse be there to help to weigh the evidence given? It is certain that eventually Registered Nurses who are also Certified Midwives, will be employed as public officials in midwifery work, and the presence of one of these highly skilled workers on the Departmental Committee could only have added to its value.

London Poor-Law Hospitals.

In the House of Commons on November 28th, Lieut.-Colonel FREMANTLE (St. Albans) asked the Minister of Health (1) what was the number of beds actually available in each poor-law hospital in London, for the sick in wards staffed by trained nurses; (2) what was the actual number of beds in infirm wards served by untrained attendants in the poor-law institutions in London; (3) what was the number of trained nurses and untrained attendants,

respectively, in the poor-law hospitals and infirm wards of the poor law institutions in London.

Sir KINGSLEY WOOD replied: Wards for the sick and infirm in the separate infirmaries of London which are ordinarily staffed by trained nurses, probationers in various stages of training, and ward maids or attendants, contain 16,520 beds. Wards for the sick and infirm included in other poor-law institutions are usually staffed by trained nurses, assistant nurses, and attendants, and contain some thousands of beds. My right hon. friend regrets that no more precise figures for the number of beds or the number of nurses and attendants are available.

The Ministry of Health has now been established for nine years, and we are of opinion that it is high time the figures asked for should be obtainable. If such statistics are not available, why is the nation taxed to maintain the Department?

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

The Prevention of Noise.

The Minister of Health received a joint deputation recently from the British Medical Association and the People's League of Health, which drew attention to the need for the control and diminution of preventible noise for the mental and physical health of the community. Sir Robert Armstrong Jones said that the kind of noises that disturbed sleep and harassed and distressed the mind, were mostly of the avoidable kind. They comprised sudden unexpected shocks of surprise, or the "unusual" and unsurmised and unanticipated, such as motor hooters, the uncontrolled exhaust, the pneumatic drill, the vibrations of fast driven vehicles with solid tyres, railway whistles, milkcans, noisy trains, and all kinds of strident horns.

The Minister promised that the representations of the Deputation should be carefully considered.

Rheumatism.

Dr. Fortescue Fox, lecturing at the Royal Institute of Public Health on "Rheumatism in relation to Industry," said that apart from surgical procedures very little had been done to provide special treatment for rheumatic diseases. In spite of the burdens it laid upon industry, there was as yet no special department for rheumatism. Fine work had been done at the English spas, but this only touched the fringe. In Continental countries town clinics for physical treatment had been established by the friendly societies to supplement the work of the spas. They dealt with forms of chronic disease in the industrial population which the hospitals were unable to provide for. The great physical forces that lay about us: heat and cold in air and water, light, electricity, friction, and movement were true physical remedies, and the body responded to these remedies by a wonderful series of reactions affecting both the tissues and organs. The universal belief and experience of mankind had been amply justified by physical and physiological discovery, and we now knew that all diseases which had a physical factor in their causation were properly treated by physical remedies.

The Clinic for Rheumatism about to be set up by the British Red Cross Society would be completely equipped for physical treatment and clinical investigation.

LEGAL MATTERS.

Damages for a Nurse.

Miss Hilda Proctor, of Harlow Street, Dingle, Liverpool, formerly a Nurse of the Bagshot Benefit Nursing Association, was in the King's Bench Division of the High Court, on November 7th, awarded £587 damages against Messrs. J. W. Massey & Co., Ltd., grocers, of Victoria Street, Westminster. After visiting a patient she was knocked off her cycle by one of the motor vans of the firm, sustaining a fracture of the left leg in three places with subsequent shortening and probably loss of employment.

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