

Enclosure 1.

SIR,—

Colonial Office, Downing Street, 19th February, 1887.

I am directed by Secretary Sir Henry Holland to request that you will call the attention of the Royal College of Physicians to the fact that, within recent years, the question of the compulsory segregation of lepers has attracted the attention of various colonial Governments, in different parts of the world; that in one colony an Act has been passed bearing in this direction; and that circumstances might easily arise which would call for a definite decision of the Secretary of State on the subject.

In the years 1867 and 1876 the circular despatches of which copies are annexed for reference were addressed to the various colonial Governments in support of the opinion that leprosy was not contagious. These despatches were based on reports of the Royal College of Physicians to that effect. This opinion, however, has never been accepted by the general public of those colonies where leprosy is endemic. A section of the local medical practitioners has held persistently the opposite view; and of late years the prevalence of this contrary opinion has decidedly increased, while it is supported by a growing desire of the community generally to guard themselves against danger from so loathsome a disease.

Under these circumstances, Sir Henry Holland would be obliged to the President of the College of Physicians if he would inform him whether the experience of recent years has shown any reason for questioning the opinion formerly held by the College; and whether, in his opinion, compulsory segregation of lepers is a measure which should receive the sanction and approval of the Secretary of State.

I have, &c.,

The Registrar of the Royal College of Physicians.

EDWARD WINGFIELD.

Enclosure 2.

SIR,—

Royal College of Physicians, London, S.W., 16th August, 1887.

Referring to your communication of the 19th February last, addressed to the College on the subject of leprosy, I have the honour, by direction of the College, to forward the following reply for the information of Secretary Sir Henry Holland.

The College is quite aware that there is much difference of opinion respecting the communicability of leprosy, and that many colonial practitioners and inhabitants do not concur in the views expressed by the College in its report in 1867. The College is of opinion that, if there be any elements of contagion in leprosy, they are not more to be dreaded than are those in the case of syphilis, which is not commonly considered to justify compulsory segregation on the part of those affected. The College believes that leprosy is not contagious in the conventional sense of the term, but, if at all, is only so in low degree and under exceptional services. The College is of opinion that a further investigation into some of the more recondite points respecting the pathology of the disease would confirm or remove any doubt that may still remain as to the question of communicability, and it therefore recommends that the Government should institute such an investigation as this College might direct, and report on to the Government when completed.

Whilst the College does not believe compulsory segregation to be justifiable, the encouragement of leper asylums or houses properly regulated it considers most desirable, such asylums not to be regarded as prisons, and so arranged as not to prove *foci* for intensifying the disease, but as refuges where kindness, care, and enjoyment of the simple though necessary conditions of a healthy life would be insured. In this direction the College strongly recommends State interference and assistance.

I have, &c.,

Edward Wingfield, Esq.

HENRY A. PITMAN, Registrar.

No. 51.

(Circular.)

SIR,—

Downing Street, 9th November, 1887.

With reference to my circular despatch of the 6th June last, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy, as presented to Parliament, of the declaration signed by the Conference at Paris on the 1st December last, and of the final protocol signed by the Conference at Paris on the 7th July last, relative to the International Convention of the 14th March, 1884, for the protection of submarine telegraph cables.

You will observe from the final protocol that the 1st May, 1888, has been fixed as the date on which the International Convention shall come into operation.

I have, &c.,

H. T. HOLLAND.

The Officer Administering the Government of New Zealand.