Annual medical report / Colony and Protectorate of Kenya.

KENYA

Medical Dept. Report.

for the years 1938 & 1939.

KENYA

4

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT REPORT (Abbreviated)

FOR THE YEARS

1938 and 1939.

15/39

1. ADMINISTRATION.

No change of importance took place during the years 1938 or 1939, save that in the former year the Director of Medical Services ceased to be a member of the Executive Council of the Colony.

In the year 1939 a Native Welfare Conference was established consisting of the Chief Native Commissioner, Chairman, the Director of Medical Services, the Director of Agriculture, the Director of Education and the Director of Veterinary Services, and as the Chief Native Commissioner remains a member of Executive Council, a channel of liaison between that body and the Medical Department has been re-established.

The chief administrative problem with which the Department was faced during the years 1938 and 1939 was, as has now been the case for a good many years past, the problem of how to meet the ever growing demands of the African population for indoor and outdoor medical relief. Throughout the period almost every Government African hospital was overcrowded, and in many cases the degree of overcrowding was such as to make it a matter of the greatest difficulty to ensure the maintenance of a reasonable standard of efficiency. At the moment a full answer to this problem is not in sight, for it is beyond question that the demands of the people for medical relief are greater than can be fully met at their present standard of economic development. In the meantime, however, some preparations might be made against the day when more hospitals and larger funds for their maintenance may be available, for an essential matter in the maintenance and improvement of standards in these hospitals will be the provision not only of a larger but of a better African staff than is at present available. Of especial importance will be the provision of trained African female nurses. Adequate facilities for the training of African nurses have, up to the present, been lacking, but much could be done if satisfactory hostel accommodation could be provided, and the matter will be kept in mind.

Administration in relation to war conditions.

For long prior to the outbreak of war much of the time of the headquarters staff of the Medical Department was occupied in making plans and preparations for dealing with the medical emergencies which might arise.

In this connection we had two matters to keep in mind, for it was not only necessary to ensure that all military medical emergencies could be met but to ensure as well that the civil work of the department, and more especially its activities in the great native reserves, were carried on with the very least diminution or dislocation. This was essential, not only on social and public health grounds, but for political reasons, and also because it was clear, even then, that general development would soon be a matter, not of less, but of even greater importance than before, and that every activity which might have any bearing on such development should be continued with all possible vigour.

In the event, though large numbers of staff, both European and African, were withdrawn from their stations for military service on the outbreak of war, it was not found necessary to close down any single medical institution in the country,

country, either hospital or out-dispensary, and in all areas some measure of service continued to be rendered.

SECTION II.

PUBLIC HEALTH, General Remarks.

Judged by the incidence of the major epidemic diseases the years 1938 and 1939 were satisfactory. Smallpox was not recorded in the Colony during these years, and the number of cases of plague which came to notice, namely, twenty-seven in 1938 and four in 1939, are the smallest which have been noted during, at the least, the past twenty years. No notable outbreaks of malaria occurred, the incidence of human trypanosomiasis remained low, and cerebro-spinal fever occurred only sporadically.

Whether, however, the actual standard of the health and nourishment of the people was better or worse than in previous years it is impossible to say. It may, however, be ventured that the general standard of health of the European community would compare favourably with that of any similar community in Europe. It may be too that the standards of health of the Asian and African communities would, on the whole, compare not unfavourably with other similar communities elsewhere. What is of more importance is that in the case of all there is room for improvement, and in the case of the last two room for very great improvement indeed. In the case of the African community certain investigations which were carried out during the period with regard to the health of children of school age in Nairobi contributed once again to the accumulating mass of evidence of the need for great improvement in the nutrition of the people.

11. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

Malaria:	No epidemic occurred.
Trypanosomiasis.	17 cases came to notice in 1938 and 26 in 1939.
Plague.	27 cases occurred in 1938 and 4 in 1939.
Typhus.	24 cases occurred in 1938 and 22 in 1939.
Smallpox.	No cases occurred.
Pneumonia.	in 1939 5,621 cases of lobar and broncho pneumonia were treated in Government hospitals with 468 deaths as against 4,825 cases with 852 deaths in 1938; the hospital mortality rate was therefore 8.3% in 1939 as against 17.66% in the preceding year.

"MAY AND BAKER 693" (DAGENAN).

The outstanding event of the year 1939 in the field of medical relief has undoubtedly been the remarkable results which have been obtained in the treatment of pneumonia with the new drug "May and Baker 693".

This drug first came on to the market about the middle of 1938. By the courtesy of the manufacturers, a generous supply of the drug was made available for trial in Nairobi in the autumn of that year. The results were so satisfactory that towards the end of that year, when the Medical Estimates for 1939 were still under consideration by Legislative Council, extra provision to the amount of £700 was inserted, in order that the drug might be generally available for the treatment of pneumonia in Africans in all hospitals throughout the Colony. Supplies were immediately ordered which arrived early in January and throughout 1939 the drug has been in general use

use in almost all hospitals in the Colony.

Tuberculosis. 1,443 cases were treated in 1938 and 1,667 in 1939; as has been usual for some years past there has been an increase in the number of cases treated.

Cerebro-spinal fever. 443 cases were reported in 1938 and 300 in 1939.

Leprosy. 269 cases were under treatment during the year.

Helminthic Diseases. 69,434 cases were treated in 1939 and 68,306 in 1938, these figures show an increase of about 30,000 over any previous two year period.

111. VITAL STATISTICS.

The estimated population was as follows:-

Europeans.		Africans.		Indians.	
1938.	1939.	1938.	1939.	1938.	1939.
20,894.	22,808.	3,280,777.	3,413,371.	44,635.	43,195.

Arabs and Others.		Goans.	
1938.	1939.	1938.	1939.
15,851.	17,276.	3,734.	3,702.

Owing to the absence of any general system of notification of births and deaths, no figures are available with regard to the total births and birth rates, total deaths and death rates, the infantile mortality rate, or the main causes of deaths under the different heads.

IV. HYGIENE AND SANITATION.

In the towns work has been carried out on the usual lines, and many improvements have been effected. In the Native Reserves progress has continued to the extent that increasing numbers of Africans are anxious to improve their domestic environment, and by accepting the help and advice of the European Health Inspectors and their African Assistants are setting good examples to many hundreds of their neighbours. The European Health Inspector in the Native Reserve District has proved his value.

SCHOOL HYGIENE.

In Nairobi an important experiment in the giving of a daily ration of free milk to all African school children was carried out throughout 1938 and 1939. The experiment was carefully controlled by a medical officer detailed for the purpose, and a large number of important data were collected. The results of the experiment will, it is hoped, be published in a special report.

FOOD IN RELATION TO HEALTH AND DISEASE.

The inspection and control of food supplies is carried out in all townships so far as staff is available, and much useful work is done.

The major question arising under this heading deals not, however, with inspection but with supply, and with the education of the people in the use of the supplies which they might purchase. In the towns few Africans are yet in a position to purchase an adequate dietary and in the native reserves great agricultural

agricultural development and reorganisation of agricultural method will be required before the dietary of the peasant will be satisfactory. A feature of the past two years has, however, been the increasing tendency of Africans in the more progressive reserves to enclose land, to paddock cattle and to develop their holdings on mixed farming lines, and according to sound principles of crop and animal husbandry. This tendency, provided it can be fostered, and provided the subdivision and fragmentation of holdings into uneconomic units can be prevented, provisos which presuppose the inculcation of an adequate ambition, an adequate supply of land, outlets in secondary industries, and no undue increase of population, should, in the long run, ensure good nourishment, good health and prosperity. The provisos are however, important.

SECTION III.

PORT HEALTH and ADMINISTRATION.

SEA PORTS.

The number of vessels which entered Kilindini or Mombasa Harbours during the past two years was as follows:-

	1938.	1939.
Steamships.	711.	644.
Dhows.	1,708.	1,680.
Empire Flying Boats.	214.	177.

	1938.	1939.
Steamship tonnage.	2,254,410.	2,116,540.

	1938.	1939.
Steamships medically inspected on arrival.	108.	83.
Sailing ships, including native vessels, medically inspected on arrival.	198.	218.
Vessels arriving in Port suspected.	Nil.	1.
Vessels placed under Quarantine Restrictions subject to Special Sanitary measures (doubtful smallpox).	Nil.	1.
Passengers medically inspected under special smallpox regulations.	13,073.	10,259.
Passengers landed subject to surveillance.	88.	291.
Bills of Health issued.	1,387.	1,191.

Infectious Diseases in the Port.

The Port remained free from all major infectious diseases throughout the year. No infected rats were found.

Sanitary Conditions of the Port.

The port area, which is under the control of the Railways and Harbours Administration, was, as has been usual for many years past, maintained in a condition which was a model of sanitation and general cleanliness.

Mosquito Breeding.

The amount of mosquito breeding occurring in the Port area is very small.

AIR PORTS.

The position in regard to authorised landing grounds remains as set out in the Report for 1937.

Mosquitos at Air Ports.

At Kisumu considerable progress was made with regard to measures directed against anopheles. The Aedes index was nil.

At Mombasa Aedes surveys were continued, and in April 1938 an Entomological Field Assistant was appointed to initiate and supervise a special campaign against Aedes mosquitos in the Port and Municipal area. House to house inspections were organised at fortnightly intervals to reduce the high percentage of premises in which breeding had been found during the 1937 survey. By the end of the year 1939 the percentage of houses found breeding had dropped from 14.2 to 7.2 generally on the Island, but it was still high in the Old Town. In November 1939 additional By-laws for the suppression of mosquitos were passed, and towards the end of the year the position was improving, but there is still much to do.

Insects in Aeroplanes.

At Mombasa disinfestation was carried out on four occasions with a pressure sprayer and the new non-inflammable insecticide - Deskito Fluid.

Southbound planes which have landed at Naivasha and stayed overnight are dealt with and any plane making an overnight stay at Mombasa.

Searches were made in all northbound planes for insects during the year.

The following is a summary of the results:-

	Mosquitoes.	Insects.	Flies.	Butterflies.	Moths.
January.	-	16	2	4	1
February.	-	8	1	-	1
March.	-	18	2	1	-
April.	-	4	-	-	-
May.	-	7	9	-	-
June.	-	-	7	-	-
July.	-	2	-	-	-
August.	-	6	-	-	-
September.	-	3	-	-	-
October.	"	"	"	"	-
November.	-	-	-	-	-
December T.africans	2♀	5	2	-	-

At Kisumu spraying of aircraft on arrival and departure is carried out by an European overseer.

Total number of aircraft disinfected in 1939: 976.

234 I.A. Flying boats sprayed on arrival.
230 " " " " " departure.
111 Wilson Airways machines sprayed on arrival.
68 " " " " " departure.
53 South African Airways machines sprayed on arrival.
52 " " " " " " departure.
98 R.A.F. machines sprayed on arrival.
99 " " " " departure.
17 Miscellaneous machines sprayed on arrival.
14 " " " " departure.
976.

SECTION IV.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

The comparative figures of maternity cases among Africans for the past two years are as follows:-

	1938.	1939.
At centres established in connection with Government Hospitals with the help of Local Native Councils Funds and at Government Hospitals.	2,622	3,899
At the Lady Grigg Maternity Centres, Nairobi and Mombasa.	1,290	1,148
At Mission Hospitals.	1,129	1,195

SECTION V.

WORK DONE AT HOSPITALS, DISPENSARIES, OUT-DISPENSARIES, VENEREAL CLINICS, THE MENTAL HOSPITAL, MEDICAL WORK CARRIED OUT BY MISSIONARY SOCIETIES, ETC.

The numbers of patients treated at hospitals and dispensaries during the period under review were as follows:-

	European In-patients.	European Out-patients.	Asiatic & African In-patients.	Asiatic & African Out-patients.
1938.	1,704	4,748	51,029	492,589
1939.	2,197	5,855	58,634	482,199

In addition 687,910 first attendances were recorded at out-dispensaries in the Native Reserves in 1938 and approximately 750,000 in 1939.

SURGERY.

In all parts of the country Africans continue to come into hospitals in increasing numbers for surgical treatment, and the fear of such treatment seems to be rapidly disappearing from the native mind.

Increasing numbers of African women suffering from vesico-vaginal fistula continue to be seen and treated.

The table of operations performed throughout the Colony for the past two years, including both major and minor operations, is as follows:-

	1938.	1939.
On Europeans	602	946
On Asians	650	796
On Africans	16,924	18,558
Totals	18,176	20,300

THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM MENTAL DISORDERS.

Since the end of 1938 the Mathari Mental Hospital has been under the charge of a Medical Officer who, though he is also in medical charge of the Nairobi Prison and certain "Approved Schools" for delinquent children, spends the greater part of his time at the Mental Hospital and has been permanently appointed to the post.

LABORATORIES.

The number of examinations of specimens of various kinds carried out at the Nairobi and Mombasa Laboratories during the past three years were as follows:-

1937.	1938.	1939.
58,329.	72,478.	74,720.

SECTION VI.

TRAINING OF LOCAL MEDICAL AND HEALTH PERSONNEL.

Hospital Assistants. Training was carried on as usual at the depot attached to the Nairobi Native Hospital. The object of the course of training, which lasts four years, is to turn out an efficient male nurse. All teaching is in English. Eleven recruits were admitted at the beginning of 1938 from Government feeder hospitals and one from a Mission hospital, while nineteen were admitted in 1939.

Compounders. Two compounders passed the final examination in 1938 and two in 1939.

Training of African Women.

A number of African women attended lectures together with the men, and at all district hospitals where there are European Sisters practical training was provided. The work of these African girls is in many cases exceedingly good, and if an adequate hostel can be provided in connexion with the new Group Hospital which is now in course of erection, it would soon be possible to turn out very efficient African female nurses.

SECTION VII.

FINANCE.

1938 and 1939.

The comparative table of the sanctioned estimates and the actual expenditure of the Medical Department for the past four years is as follows:-

Year.	Sanctioned Estimates.	Sanctioned Extraordinary Estimates.	Total Sanctioned.	Actual Recurrent Expenditure.	Actual Extraordinary Expenditure.
1936.	£195,562.	£1,500	£197,062.	£196,~~838~~ 368.	£682.
1937.	£207,353	£3,095	£210,448	£209,839	£3,919
1938.	£215,163	£2,925	£218,088	£214,155	£15,225
1939.	£223,752	£8,310	£232,062	£218,958	£10,958

The revenue collected was as follows:-

1936	£23,392.
1937	£23,013
1938	£21,113
1939	£22,630

Of the total estimated expenditure in 1938 of £3,577,918 for the Colony and Protectorate, £218,088 represented expenditure on Public Health and Medical Relief, a ratio of 1 to 16.4 or 6.1 per cent.

Of the total estimated expenditure in 1939 of £3,669,643 for the Colony and Protectorate, £232,062 represented expenditure on Public Health and Medical Relief, a ratio of 1. to 15.81 or 6.32 per cent.

TABLE SHOWING THE MAIN CAUSES OF MORBIDITY IN RELATION TO IN-PATIENTS AND OUT-PATIENTS AT HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES.

1938. Total Incidence	550,070.	1939. Total Incidence	543,885.
Epidemics, etc.	16.02%		16.4%
Diarrhoea & Enteritis	2.21%		1.7%
Caries & Pyorrhoea	2.16%		1.6%
Ankylostomiasis	.45%		.5%
Other diseases of Digestive System	21.58%		21.7%
Pneumonia.	.88%		1.0%
Bronchitis	10.69%		11.1%
Other diseases of Respiratory System.	4.69%		4.9%
Organs of Vision	3.95%		3.8%
Ear and Mastoid	1.44%		1.4%
Other diseases Nervous System	1.13%		1.0%
Circulatory System	.25%		.3%
Genito Urinary System	.79%		.9%
Ulcers	6.96%		6.8%
Scabies	2.18%		2,0%
Other diseases Skin & Cellular Tissues	4.29%		4.1%
Bones and Organs of locomotion	1.79%		3.4%
External Causes	12.33%		12.2%
General Diseases	4.45%		3.0%
Ill defined and Other diseases	1.76%		2,2%