

Annual report on the medical services / Sierra Leone.

Contributors

Sierra Leone. Medical Department.

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SIERRA LEONE

Medical Report

For the Year 1941



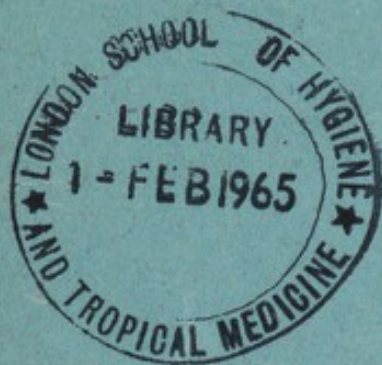
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1942

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Annual Medical Report for the Year 1941.

1—Administration.

1. *Staff.*—The Senior Medical Officer (Health) was transferred to the Gold Coast and replaced by one from Nigeria. Three Medical Officers remain seconded for service with the Military Forces. Two Medical Officers reported for duty during the year to replace one retired and one resigned. One British Nursing Sister arrived to replace one retired.

2. An Administrative Officer was appointed as Secretary to the Department in February.

3. Ten additional African nurses were appointed. During the year the Sir Alfred Jones Research Laboratory was closed. That circumstances should have compelled the closure of this laboratory is a matter for great regret and it would be difficult to assess the debt that the people and Government of this Colony owe not only for the valuable research the staff has done in the prevention and cure of disease but also for the services the various Directors have rendered as Consulting Pathologists to the Government. Towards the end of the year the Government opened its own laboratory with the following staff:—

- 1 Pathologist
- 1 Assistant Bacteriologist
- 1 Technical Assistant
- 4 African Laboratory Attendants.

4. In the interim period between the closing of the Sir Alfred Jones Research Laboratory and the opening of the Government Laboratory the work was carried on by the Assistant Bacteriologist assisted by the staff of the Military Area Laboratory.

5. The regrading of the subordinate technical staff of the department is still under consideration, but it is hoped to reach agreement in this matter early in 1942.

The reserve stocks of drugs and dressing were increased during the year.

6. *Finance.*—The approved Estimates for 1941 were:—

<i>Head.</i>					<i>Personal Emoluments.</i>	<i>Other Charges.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
					£	£	£
Medical	...	...	...	...	44,684	29,409	74,093
Health	...	...	...	...	14,556	15,065	29,621
Totals	...	...	...	...	59,240	44,474	103,714

7. Expenditure from grants from Imperial Funds were approved as follows:—

	£
(a) Treatment of Yaws	400
(b) Malaria Investigation	4,000
(c) Trypanosomiasis Service	22,121

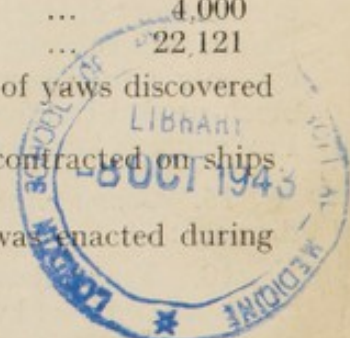
(a) was provided for the purchase of drugs to treat cases of yaws discovered during the work of the Sleeping Sickness teams.

(b) was provided to investigate the incidence of malaria contracted on ships lying in the harbour.

8. *Legislation.*—No major Medical or Health Legislation was enacted during the year.

Public Health.

9. The past year has seen a further increase in the work of the department. Attendances at dispensaries and admissions to hospitals have risen considerably. While this increase has been general it was most marked in Freetown which since the war has been subjected to a large influx of labour from the Protectorate.



10. COLONY.				1939.	1940.	1941.
<i>Connaught Hospital.</i>				—	—	—
1.	Inpatients	...	...	2,651	2,612	3,762
2.	Outpatients:					
	New Cases	...	...	17,222	22,718	25,061
	Subsequent attendances	...	...	34,784	108,192	116,139
3.	<i>Venereal Diseases Clinic.</i>					
(a)	Seamen's Clinic:					
	Total Attendances	...	...	—	820	—
(b)	General Clinic:					
	New Cases	...	...	—	1,311	—
	Subsequent attendances	...	...	—	4,926	—
<i>European Hospital.</i>					1940.	1941.
					—	—
1.	Inpatients	...	...		335	514
2.	Outpatients:					
	New Cases	...	...		—	163
	Subsequent attendances	...	...		—	332
<i>Colony Dispensaries.</i>						
	New Cases	...	...		—	26,589
	Subsequent attendances	...	...		—	62,282

11. PROTECTORATE.

The total figures for the Protectorate are :—

1.	Inpatients	...	...	—	2,608
2.	Outpatients :				
(a)	New Cases	...	...	—	52,450
(b)	Subsequent attendances	...	...	—	163,094

12. Consequent on the posting of female nurses to Protectorate hospitals during the past eighteen months there has been an increase in the number of women admitted and it has been possible to carry out a certain amount of Maternity and Infant Welfare work in centres where little had been possible before.

13. Table I gives the principal causes of morbidity in relation to Inpatients and Outpatients at Hospitals and Dispensaries under the direct control of a Medical Officer. In other cases (*i.e.* Dispensers' stations) the totals only are given as diagnosis in these cases is insufficiently accurate to be of any value for statistical purposes.

One new dispensary was opened at Yonibana during the year and the old dispensary at Batkanu was replaced by a new one. A new dispensary building was completed at Gbap in Bonthe District.

14. Due to war conditions no major extensions or improvements were undertaken at any of the hospitals but a scheme for a considerably enlarged hospital and training school at Bo is in course of preparation. This scheme is designed to provide not only a fully equipped and up to date hospital for the Protectorate but also a much needed training centre for Medical and Health staff to be recruited from the Protectorate for service there.

15. *Communicable Diseases.*—The following is a summary of the more important diseases :—

16. *Trypanosomiasis.*—2,577 cases were treated out of a population of 57,405 examined compared with 3,063 out of a population of 19,300 in 1940. The teams are now working in areas where the incidence is considerably lower than in areas previously covered.

17. *Malaria*—13,938 cases were reported. Needless to say this does not represent the full incidence of this disease.

18. *Blackwater Fever*.—There were six cases with two deaths compared with two cases with one death in the previous year.

19. *Smallpox*.—There were seven cases notified with no deaths. Three of these were landed from ships calling at the port.

20. *Typhoid Fever*.—There were thirty-two cases and five deaths compared with nineteen cases and one death in 1940.

21. *Cerebro Spinal Fever*.—There were twenty-two cases with four deaths. Of these sixteen occurred in Freetown. The overcrowded state of Freetown has no doubt contributed to the increased incidence of this disease. No cases were reported in 1940.

22. *Yaws*.—There were 25,966 cases compared with 14,294 in 1940. The increase is largely due to better facilities now available for treatment but the figure falls very far short of the true total and represents only those cases treated. Of the number given 6,581 cases were treated by Sleeping Sickness Teams.

23. *Tetanus*.—There were thirty-two cases with fourteen deaths compared with thirty-six cases and eleven deaths in 1940.

24. *Leprosy*.—Ninety-six new cases were reported compared with one hundred and twenty-four in 1940.

25. *Bacillary Dysentery*.—Nineteen cases with nine deaths occurred. The corresponding figures for the previous year being forty-two and three.

26. *Amoebic Dysentery*.—There were two hundred and fifty-eight cases with five deaths compared with two hundred and ninety-three cases and five deaths in 1940.

27. *Dysentery (Unspecified)*.—Three hundred and six cases with eight deaths were reported.

28. *Ankylostomiasis*.—Three hundred and fifty-one cases were reported. The disease is widespread but only relatively a small percentage seek treatment as the effects produced by it are generally not severe.

VITAL STATISTICS.

29. There has been no change in the system of registration during the year.

30. Due to the large and unknown immigration into Freetown to meet labour requirements it is impossible to give a population estimate of any value and consequently no birth or death rates are given this year. The total registrations are shown along with the figures for the two previous years.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS. IN FREETOWN AND COLONY.

BIRTHS.

District.	1939.			1940.			1941.		
	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
Freetown ...	731	705	1,436	691	719	1,410	743	762	1,505
Rest of Colony ...	575	532	1,107	570	583	1,153	544	528	1,072
Total ...	1,306	1,237	2,543	1,261	1,302	2,563	1,287	1,290	2,577

DEATHS.

District.	1939.			1940.			1941.		
	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
Freetown ...	751	645	1,396	853	687	1,540	1,271	862	2,133
Rest of Colony ...	716	522	1,238	761	618	1,376	949	493	1,622
Total ...	1,467	1,167	2,634	1,614	1,305	2,916	2,220	1,355	3,755

31. Births and Deaths registered in the Protectorate where registration is very irregular and incomplete were:—

	<i>Births.</i>	<i>Deaths.</i>
Male ...	1,190	752
Female ...	1,150	559

32. It is proposed to re-organize Birth and Death Registration in the Protectorate and substitute for the present system one whereby Native Administrations and Tribal Authorities will be the Registration Authorities and Birth and Death Registration will be made compulsory throughout the territory.

33. It is hoped thereby in time to get reasonably complete figures for the whole country.

34. *Infant Mortality.*—Out of 1,505 births in Freetown 312 deaths under one year were registered giving an infant mortality rate of 207. The figures for the past five years are:—

1937.	1938.	1939.	1940.	1941.
243	192	190	180	207

Of the 207 deaths under one year 48·7 per cent. died in the first month of life.

Hygiene and Sanitation.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES.

35. *Malaria.*—In Freetown and district the Military Authorities have now assumed direct control in those areas occupied by them, and the civil authorities are responsible for measures in the rest of the area. A joint Civil and Military Committee has been established to co-ordinate control measures and ensure that the maximum use is made of available resources. The committee also decides matters of priority as between requirements in military and civil control areas. A considerable amount of temporary and semi-permanent drainage of small swamps and clearance of streams has been effected in addition to routine measures involving the use of larvicides. Major drainage works are not being undertaken pending a report by a Drainage Engineer. As far as possible any temporary and semi-permanent work being done is designed to admit of extension on a permanent basis later if required. In this connection an Army Engineer is advising the committee. The Army Authorities are also rendering technical assistance through the medium of the Field Malaria Laboratory the personnel of which undertakes species identification and special surveys in areas where necessary. The principal difficulty confronting both Military and Civil Authorities at present is shortage of junior inspection and labour supervisory staff but it is hoped that the situation will be improved in 1942 by the appointment of additional European Sanitary Superintendents.

36. The temporary drainage carried out so far, although in some cases damaged by heavy floods during the rains enabled the areas dealt with to dry up much more rapidly than in past years and helped to reduce breeding at the end of the rains, a time when it is normally very heavy. It will however be necessary to extend this next year and in many cases enlarge the existing surface drains.

37. Professor Blacklock completed his investigations into the problem of malaria contracted on ships lying in harbour and returned to the United Kingdom in September. His recommendations are now being given effect to and Commander Wilson has remained in Freetown to continue the control in connection with shipping. The routine control in Freetown has been re-organized on the basis of Professor Blacklock's recommendations. Minor temporary drainage work and stream clearance in Kissy Village and vicinity has produced very satisfactory results evidenced by the very large drop in the Anopheles Room-Index. Work is proceeding on the Bullom Shore of the estuary and the swamp on Tasso Island has been drained and provided with a tide gate to prevent backing up of water during high tide. Similar measures are being taken at Levuma Swamp south of Freetown.

38. Spraying of houses with insecticide has been undertaken in those parts of Freetown which adjoin Naval and Royal Air Force establishments.

39. In the Protectorate drainage work has been carried out at Batkanu in a swamp adjoining the Government reservation. Further work is however required on this swamp. It has not been possible to extend the drainage work at Bo this year.

40. A considerable amount of work has been carried out at Makeni where a number of acres of swamp have been drained and rendered cultivable. A scheme has been prepared for the drainage of Heddle Swamp in Bonthe town which will be given effect to next year. A certain amount of clearance of stream bed and drainage has been effected at Port Loko.

41. *Sleeping Sickness*.—During the year the campaign has proceeded on the same lines as in the previous year. African subordinate staff (Microscopists, etc.) has been increased from twenty-eight to thirty-eight but the numbers of senior staff employed has remained unchanged.

42. The following is a summary of the work done since the commencement of the campaign:—

Year.	Population Examined.	Cases.	Incidence.
1939	2,270	736	—
1940	19,300	3,063	15·9
1941	57,405	2,577	4·5

43. The toxic reactions during treatment with Antrypol and Tryparsamide which caused so much trouble in 1940 have been reduced to a level at which they no longer give rise to concern. This has been done by instituting a suitable interval between the first and second injections and by altering the proportions of antrypol and tryparsamide in the course.

44. An important side of the work has been the investigation of a large part of the Protectorate outside the known epidemic area to discover whether other foci existed. No serious foci have been discovered except in the country adjoining the epidemic area. The whole of the area which will require mass treatment has therefore now been satisfactorily delimited.

45. Treatment of cases of Yaws found during the mass examination for sleeping sickness was undertaken during the year. This necessitated no extra staff. The total number of cases treated was 6,581. The incidence in parts of the Kono District was as high as 25 per cent. of the total population.

46. *Plague*.—Anti plague measures continued to be carried out in Freetown. During the year 6,389 rats were trapped and 3,287 examined for evidence of plague infection and were found negative.

47. *Yellow Fever*.—There were no cases of yellow fever during the year. The usual Anti-Aedes measures were carried out in Freetown throughout the year. 88,604 house and compound inspections were made and aedes breeding was discovered on 149 occasions. 11,584 trees were inspected and aedes found breeding in holes in fifty cases. 8,864 inspections of boats and canoes were made and aedes found on ten occasions.

48. *Rabies*.—2,295 dogs were destroyed in Freetown. Twenty-four suspected dogs were subjected to post mortem examination and Negri bodies were found in the brains of three. 398 licensed dogs were inoculated against canine rabies. There was no case of human rabies during the year.

GENERAL MEASURES OF SANITATION.

49. The department continues to be responsible for the disposal of refuse and night soil in Freetown and at all Government stations in the Protectorate as well as in a number of Protectorate towns. These services in Freetown have been severely taxed during the past two years as a result of the greatly increased population. Shortage of transport has also added to the difficulties.

50. Attempts to improve conditions in Freetown markets and to restrict street trading in foodstuffs have not met with great success so far.

51. The Babadori reservoir for Freetown was in use during the year but storage is still far below requirements. Owing to the greatly increased population and the demand from shipping, consumption was high, but shortage at the end of the dry season was not quite so acute as in the previous year. Rationing was actually in force from the middle of March to early in June.

52. The chloramine plant continued to work satisfactorily and uniformly good results were obtained from examinations made throughout the year.

53. A new storage reservoir and purification plant is under construction for Hill Station and a new proposal involving the impounding of a hundred million gallons is under consideration for Freetown.

54. Owing to difficulties of execution at the present time, no progress can be reported in connection with water supplies in the Protectorate.

SCHOOL HYGIENE.

55. Little improvement can be reported in the sanitary conditions of schools which with a few exceptions is not of a high standard. Lack of staff has precluded any frequent or regular inspection or any examination of school children. More frequent inspections of Protectorate schools will shortly be possible and it is hoped that the more obvious defects in hygiene can gradually be eliminated. War conditions preclude any major improvements being undertaken immediately.

LABOUR CONDITIONS.

56. A still further influx of labour has taken place from the Protectorate into Freetown and the Colony and housing conditions are extremely unsatisfactory. It is estimated that the increase in numbers since the outbreak of war is in the vicinity of 35,000 and of this number only a very small fraction has been housed by employers. The remainder are overcrowding the already crowded slum areas of Freetown and in some cases the Colony villages. An obvious solution would appear to be to enlist all the permanent labour employed by the Army, Navy and Air Force and house them as Labour Battalions in specially constructed camps.

57. Shortage of inspecting staff has again not permitted as much inspection of mining areas as is desirable. Housing conditions in the properties of one large company are very satisfactory and the company readily accepts any suggestions for improvement. Unfortunately this cannot be said of another large company which provides very poor accommodation and appears to take insufficient interest in the housing and general welfare of their labour. Generally conditions in the Gold Mining Areas are poor but the temporary nature of many of the enterprises preclude much being done. Fortunately individual camps are usually small.

58. Increased cost of living has forced a rise in rates paid to labourers. Unfortunately the additional money is not always spent on necessities of living, the standard of which still remains too low.

HOUSING, TOWN PLANNING AND SLUM CLEARANCE.

59. War conditions have precluded any advance in this direction although an effort is being made to control and improve certain badly planned towns in the Protectorate. It has not yet been possible to reach agreement regarding the re-development of the area in Freetown which was destroyed by fire in 1940 and no further progress has been made in the matter of slum clearance.

60. The housing of European Officials in Freetown is a matter of considerable concern and a number are living under conditions which even in war-time are scarcely tolerable.

PORT HEALTH WORK AND ADMINISTRATION.

61. The Port of Freetown was free from quarantinable disease during the year.

62. As a result of war conditions the number of ships to be dealt with has risen very greatly and one medical officer is fully occupied with this work alone. As from December 1st a modified quarantine procedure was adopted in order to avoid any delay to shipping. Masters of ships which have not touched at any infected ports are asked to complete a declaration relating to health conditions on board and in cases where there has been no case of illness and no death during the voyage free pratique is granted by the pilot. In all other cases a visit is paid to the ship by the Port Health Officer. Check visits to a proportion of ships granted pratique by pilots are also made by the Port Health Officer. These visits have not revealed any tendency on the part of Masters to evade quarantine measures.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

63. The Maternity Hospital in Freetown dealt with 891 admissions which is 167 more than in 1940. Of these 387 were for Ante-Natal treatment and 504 for confinement.

Ante-Natal Clinic :—

New cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,207
Subsequent attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	7,661
Home visits	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,386

Post Natal Clinic :—

New cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	608
Subsequent attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	778

Infant Welfare Clinic :—

New cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	769
Subsequent attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	13,518
Home visits	...	...	...	...	...	...	15,189

64. Where female nurses are available in the Protectorate a beginning has been made with similar services but attendances are irregular and people are not yet accustomed to this type of service. There are indications however that where female staff is available women can be induced to use the facilities. Within the past eighteen months it has been possible to induce women in whom difficult delivery was anticipated to come into hospital for confinement and as more trained female staff becomes available endeavours will be made to extend the service.

65. In Pujehun District an experiment is being made in the elementary training of illiterate native women in midwifery and their subsequent establishment in what are called 'midwives houses' in their various chiefdoms. So far the experiment gives promise of being very useful.

PRISONS.

66. The health of prisoners in Freetown Prison was fairly good throughout the year despite the crowded state of the prison. There were eight deaths in the prison during the year.

One hundred and twenty-one were admitted to hospital and 3,409 were dealt with as out-patients.

MENTAL HOSPITAL.

67. It has not been possible to ameliorate the overcrowding in this institute to any great extent. The figures for the year are as follows :—

Remaining on 31st December, 1940	...	...	...	101
Admitted	...	...	...	32
Died	...	...	...	11
Absconded	...	...	...	3
Discharged (Uncertified)	...	...	...	15
Discharged on trial (Governor's Order)	...	...	...	12
Remaining on 31st December, 1941	...	...	...	92

68. The causes of the eleven deaths were as follows :—

Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...	2
Epilepsy with cardiac failure	...	...	...	2
Chronic Nephritis	...	...	...	2
Cerebral Malaria	...	...	...	1
Dysentery and Ankylostomiasis	...	...	...	1
Astheris with cardiac failure	...	...	...	1
Ansemia with cardiac failure	...	...	...	1
Broncho pneumonia	...	...	...	1

W. P. H. LIGHTBODY,
Director of Medical Srevices.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT,
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE,
May, 1942.

RETURN OF DISEASES AND DEATHS FOR THE YEAR 1941.

Diseases.	EUROPEANS.						AFRICANS.					
	In-patients.		Deaths.		Out-patients.		In-patients.		Deaths.		Out-patients.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
1. (a) Typhoid fever ...	3	—	—	—	—	—	23	4	4	1	1	—
(b) Paratyphoid fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
2. Typhus ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	3	—	—	1	—
3. Relapsing fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. Undulant fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. Smallpox ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	3
6. Measles ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	2
7. Scarlet fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8. Whooping cough ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	61	74
9. Diphtheria ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10. Influenza :—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(a) with respiratory complications ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	37	6	—	—	258	121
(b) without respiratory complications ...	1	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
11. Cholera ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
12. Dysentery :—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(a) Amoebic ...	2	1	—	—	—	—	72	14	4	1	124	45
(b) Bacillary ...	6	—	—	—	—	—	5	4	5	4	3	1
(c) Unclassified ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	31	16	4	3	21	15
13. Plague :—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(a) Bubonic ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Pneumonic ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(c) Septicæmic ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	1
14. Acute poliomyelitis ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15. Encephalitis lethargica ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	4	4	—	2	1
16. Cerebro-spinal fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
17. Rabies ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
18. Tetanus ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	17	9	8	6	4	2
19. Tuberculosis of the respiratory system ...	6	1	—	—	—	—	94	28	26	6	63	32
20. Other tuberculosis diseases ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
21. Leprosy ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	2	—	—	59	26



62. Congenital malformation and diseases of early infancy :—

(a) Congenital debility	...	3	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	—	—	4	1
(b) Premature birth	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	4	4	4	5	1
(c) Injury at birth	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	7	6	7	2	1
Senility	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	19	12	4	2	5	1
External causes :—	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	36	33
(a) Suicide	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Other forms of violence	...	50	1	—	—	5	1	136	40	11	15	1,003	291
Ill-defined causes	...	8	—	1	—	27	7	25	7	—	—	376	302

Other Dispensaries

493	30	10	3	1,233	73	4,882	2,413	395	142	44,995	30,973
...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	51,898	41,095
493	30	10	3	1,233	73	4,882	2,413	395	142	96,893	72,068