

## **Annual report of the Medical Department / Colony of the Gambia.**

### **Contributors**

Gambia. Medical Department.

### **Publication/Creation**

London : printed by Waterlow, [1941]

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hn3aehb5>

### **License and attribution**

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

COLONY OF THE GAMBIA.ANNUAL MEDICAL AND SANITARY REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1941.

## I. ADMINISTRATION.

## A. STAFF.

1. Dr. L. H. Thomas, Officer in charge of Medical Department, went on leave on the 12th December, 1941, and Dr. M. Clayton-Mitchell took over charge of Medical Department from that date.

Dr. F. C. Collingwood arrived on the 28th September 1940 and acted as Medical Officer of Health.

Dr. D. W. Horn, Medical Officer, arrived on the 26th May, 1941.

Mr. R. A. J. Walton, Sanitary Superintendent, arrived on the 26th May, 1941.

## B. FINANCIAL.

## 2. Medical and Health Services.

|             | Estimated. | Actual. |    |    | Increase. |    |    | Decrease. |    |    |
|-------------|------------|---------|----|----|-----------|----|----|-----------|----|----|
|             | £          | £       | s. | d. | £         | s. | d. | £         | s. | d. |
| Revenue ... | 3,025      | 4,043   | 3  | 6  | 1,018     | 3  | 6  | —         | —  | —  |
| Expenditure | 32,001     | 32,623  | 15 | 11 | 622       | 15 | 11 | —         | —  | —  |

## Miscellaneous Services.

|   | Estimated. | Actual. | Increase. | Decrease. |
|---|------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
|   | £          | £       | £         | £         |
| Contributions to Medical Associations and Schools | 230        | 230     | —         | —         |

## Colony.

|                       | Estimated. | Actual. |    |    |
|-----------------------|------------|---------|----|----|
|                       | £          | £       | s. | d. |
| Total Revenue ...     | 131,500    | 247,196 | 12 | 4  |
| Total Expenditure ... | 198,986    | 208,453 | 8  | 0  |



3. The actual expenditure on the Medical and Health Services was 15.6 per cent of the total expenditure of the Colony.

## II. PUBLIC HEALTH

### A. GENERAL REMARKS.

4. During 1941, full medical services were maintained.

5. Kaiaff Dispensary was closed for the wet season from 30th June, 1941 to 13th September, 1941. The other seven dispensaries were open throughout the year.

6. Co-operation with medical authorities of the services was established and maintained. A committee was formed and met as required to deal with problems of common interest.

7. Our Infectious Diseases Hospital was temporarily loaned as a hospital for African troops — from 11th November, 1940 to 8th January, 1942.

The buildings known as Sanitary Labour Lines were converted for use as our Isolation Hospital.

8. An annex to the European Hospital was converted to provide additional accommodation of 6 beds for European patients.

### B. GENERAL DISEASES.

9. The work of the hospitals is shewn in the following summary:—

|                  | 1940.  |         | 1941.  |         |
|------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|                  | Cases. | Deaths. | Cases. | Deaths. |
| In-Patients ...  | 2,022  | 138     | 1,730  | 171     |
| Out-Patients ... | 27,379 | —       | 32,933 | —       |

10. The work done at the dispensaries shows a remarkable increase.

|                  | 1940   | 1941   |
|------------------|--------|--------|
| Out-Patients ... | 10,552 | 19,756 |

11. A table showing causes of morbidity is given as an appendix.

### C. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

12. Trypanosomiasis. — Number of cases treated during the year were 1,025. It is hoped that during 1942 another survey and a treatment campaign will be carried out in co-operation with the Royal Army Medical Corps.



13. Malaria:— Total number of cases, 2,127. Malaria remains the most important prevalent disease. 29 per cent of infant deaths were due to Malaria.

#### D. VITAL STATISTICS.

##### 1. General African Population.

14. These figures are for Bathurst only:—

|                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Estimated population     | 12,816                    |
| Births                   | 378                       |
| Total deaths             | 372                       |
| Total still births       | 45                        |
| Deaths under one year    | 92                        |
| Birth rate               | 29·3 per 1,000 population |
| Death rate               | 29·1 " " "                |
| Infantile mortality rate | 243·3 per 1,000 births.   |
| Still birth rate         | 119 per 1,000 live births |

15. The regrettable increase in infant mortality 243·3 per thousand in 1941 as compared with 151·7 per thousand in 1940 is mainly due to malaria. 29 per cent of total infant deaths were certified as due to malaria.

16. The main causes of deaths in Bathurst were:—

|   |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Diseases of the respiratory system  | ... | ... | 71  |
| Infectious and parasitic diseases (excluding venereal diseases and malaria)       | ... | ... | 83  |
| Malaria   | ... | ... | 43  |
| Diseases of the circulatory system  | ... | ... | 39  |
| Diseases of the digestive system  | ... | ... | 48  |
| Non-Venereal diseases of the genito urinary system and annexa                     | ... | ... | 24  |
| Diseases of the nervous system and sense organs                                   | ... | ... | 36  |
| Affections due to violence  | ... | ... | 12  |
| Rheumatism, diseases of nutrition and endocrine glands and other general diseases | ... | ... | 1   |
| Other diseases  | ... | ... | 15  |
| Total   | ... | ... | 372 |

#### E. TRAINING of PERSONNEL.

17. The usual courses of lectures and training were given throughout the year. Negotiations for further training of staff in Gold Coast and Nigeria are still in progress.

### III. HYGIENE AND SANITATION.

#### A. PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.

18. *Yellow Fever*. — Inoculations against Yellow Fever were done during the year among civilian population.

19. *Trypanosomiasis*. — As last year, cases diagnosed at dispensaries throughout the country were treated to a total of 1,025.

20. *Malaria*. — The usual precautions against breeding places of anopheline larvae were taken. The overcrowding of Bathurst militated against effectiveness. — It was a bad year for Malaria. We hope to introduce spraying of all houses as a measure against the adult mosquito next year.

21. *Dysentery*. — Conditions were similar to those in 1940. Strenuous efforts are being continued to deal with the overcrowding and the increase in refuse disposal in Bathurst.

22. *Small-pox*. — 13,555 vaccinations were done. 355 cases were reported with 46 deaths.

23. *Cerebrospinal fever*. — 65 cases were reported with 21 deaths. 17 deaths were in untreated cases.

#### B. GENERAL MEASURES.

24. *Sewage and Refuse Disposal*. — The increase of work has made conditions difficult at times. A new incinerator was built but lack of proper materials for its construction has handicapped its use. Controlled tipping of groundnut shell has increased the pace of swamp reclamation.

25. The drainage problem remains the same.

26. The Rainfall in Bathurst was 26.19 inches. This is the lowest which we have recorded since 1913.

27. *Propaganda*. — Shortage of staff led to the postponement of the usual Health Week.

#### C. SCHOOL HYGIENE.

28. Owing to various reasons full school inspections could not be carried out. By kind co-operation of the Army Dentist, school children were examined and treated.

#### D. HOUSING.

29. Reconstructions in Bathurst and developments in connection with British Overseas Airways Corporation led to the evacuation of certain areas in Bathurst, with a consequent overcrowding of other areas.

The problem of immigrant casual labour without any accommodation has also caused difficulty. The Health Department has co-operated with Police in the difficult task of coping with this problem and repatriating the homeless to the Protectorate.

In the Protectorate, developments are progressing. A new model village design as a suburb to Bathurst has been laid out in the Kombo. It is hoped that considerable building will take place here on strictly controlled lines during the next few years.

Several villages have been grossly overcrowded as a result of labour demands and have given much cause for anxiety to the Health Department.



#### IV. PORT HEALTH WORK AND ADMINISTRATION, AND AEROPLANE TRAFFIC.

30. For security reasons the number of ships and aeroplanes boarded during the year is not given.

31. Quarantine Regulations as foreshadowed in the report for 1940 were passed.

32. Number of rats destroyed were 3,982.

#### V. MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

33. The Maternity Hospital and Welfare Clinics continued to give good service:—

Maternity Hospital:—

|   |        |      |
|---|--------|------|
| Number of patients admitted to hospital | ...    | 196  |
| Total births                            | ... .. | 231* |
| Maternity mortality                     | ... .. | 4    |
| Tetanus neonatorum                      | ... .. | Nil. |
| Ophthalmia neonatorum                   | ... .. | Nil. |

\* This figure includes those born in district.

Clinics:—

|                   |                 |             |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|
|                   | Infant Welfare. | Ante-natal. |
| Total attendances | 9,482           | 1,843.      |

34. A preliminary inquiry into the causes of still births was started— A Note by Doctor Green states—

“ Untreated malaria seems to be the commonest cause of abortion, re the type which runs a temperature of 99°–100° for a week or two and then flares up.

Next commonest cause is *Syphilis*.

Quinine in therapeutic doses in early cases of malaria does not seem to produce abortions even with temperatures of 102°–103°.”

35. Investigation upon the serious increase of infant mortality will be made. Overcrowding and the general increase in malaria in Bathurst are certainly part causes.

L. H. THOMAS,

*Senior Medical Officer.*

## APPENDIX.

TABLE SHOWING DISEASES GROUPS TREATED IN GOVERNMENT  
HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES, 1941.  
IN-PATIENTS.

|  | Total | ... | ... | ... | ... | Total cases<br>treated. |
|--|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------|
|  |       |     |     |     |     | 1,730                   |
| Diseases of the digestive system   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 295                     |
| Diseases of the skin and cellular tissues  | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 263                     |
| Non-Venereal diseases of the genito-urinary system and<br>annexa                     | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 250                     |
| Diseases of the respiratory system   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 170                     |
| Venereal diseases...   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 156                     |
| Malaria  | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 143                     |
| Infectious and parasitic diseases (excluding venereal diseases<br>and malaria)       | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 131                     |
| Diseases of the circulatory system   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 75                      |
| Diseases of the nervous system and sense organs                                      | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 64                      |
| Diseases of the bones and organs of locomotion                                       | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 39                      |
| Other diseases   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 34                      |
| Cancer and other tumours   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 14                      |
| Rheumatism, diseases of nutrition and endocrine glands and<br>other general diseases | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12                      |
| Diseases of pregnancy, child birth, and puerperal state                              | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 9                       |
| Ill-defined diseases   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5                       |

## OUT-PATIENTS.

|  | Total | ... | ... | ... | ... | Total cases<br>treated. |
|--|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------|
|  |       |     |     |     |     | 52,689                  |
| Diseases of the digestive system   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 13,813                  |
| Diseases of the respiratory system   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7,815                   |
| Diseases of the skin and cellular tissues  | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7,033                   |
| Infectious and parasitic diseases (excluding Venereal<br>diseases and malaria)       | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6,696                   |
| Rheumatism, diseases of nutrition and endocrine glands<br>and other general diseases | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5,257                   |
| Affections due to violence   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3,513                   |
| Malaria  | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,984                   |
| Diseases of the nervous system and sense organs                                      | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,748                   |
| Non-Venereal diseases of the genito-urinary system and annexa                        | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,346                   |
| Venereal diseases  | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,284                   |
| Diseases of the bones and organs of locomotion                                       | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,237                   |
| Other diseases   | ...   | ... | ... | ... | ... | 963                     |

