



EAST AFR. PROT
24855

24855
8 JUL 14

Monson 584
for Govr
1914
13th June
Last previous Paper.
12758

PLAGUE IN MARAGOLI SECTION OF N.KAVIRONDO DIST.

Trs letter from P.M.O. embodying views on Dr J.H.Thomson's report together with report by Provincial Commr on difficulties experienced by Dr T owing to absence of interpreter and tribal retainers. His difficulties appear to have been caused by an unfortunate sequence of events rather than from unwillingness to comply with his requests.

Put by

Print & circulate

Mr Reed

AT 06/7/14

I think TAMS should have this copy, as some comment was made on the case when it came before them on 2 June - although we did not record it formally. Hyman, will you please return to me.

AT 30/7/14

at once
H. J. R.
30/7/14

Circulate (with 12758 + reply)
to TAMS (tee. 31 July 1914)

Mr. Fiddler

The Committee did not comment on this paper at the meeting of 14 Aug 1914

Next subsequent Paper

Mr. Read

Patly?

MF 6/8/14

at once
to sd

6/9/14

24855

1144
14

~~EAST AFRICA INTELLIGENCE~~

Ac. 504.

355
3 JUN 14

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

June 13th, 1914.

1026

Sir,

With reference to your despatch No. 978
of the 21st of April I have the honour to trans-
mit herewith for your information a copy of a
letter from the Principal Medical Officer embody-
ing his views on the report furnished by Dr. J. H.
Thomson on the recent epidemic of plague in the
Saragoli section of the North Kavirondo District.

I also enclose a report by the Provincial
Commissioner, Nyanza, on the difficulties ex-
perienced by Dr. Thomson owing to the absence of
an interpreter and trial retainers. In any
case, his knowledge of Swahili was presumably
very limited at the time, owing to the fact that
he had only recently arrived in the country,
and an interpreter would therefore have been of
little

From P.O. 12/58
28-5-14
From P.O. 12/58
9-6-14

THE SECRETARY

* 11 12/50

LEWIS HARRIS, F.C.O., S.P.

CHIEF OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMISSION

DEPT. OF HEALTH, LONDON, S.W.

Med & Surg

work shall commence as soon as the fixation of the first section has been definitely settled.

3. The necessity for a complete and final survey of the whole line prior to the commencement of construction would only arise if the grant of a concession for such construction was contemplated.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,

H. J. ...
Deputy GOVERNOR.
(in the presence of ...)

24853

1144
14

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

No. 584.

2053
3 JUN 14

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

June 13th, 1914.

1026

Sir,

12758

With reference to your despatch No. 378 of the 24th of April I have the honour to transmit herewith for your information a copy of a letter from the Principal Medical Officer embodying his views on the report furnished by Dr. J. H. Thomson on the recent epidemic of plague in the Karagoli section of the North Kavirondo District.

2. I also enclose a report by the Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza, on the difficulties experienced by Dr. Thomson owing to the absence of an interpreter and tribal retainers. In any case, his knowledge of Swahili was presumably very limited at the time, owing to the fact that he had only recently arrived in the country, and an interpreter would therefore have been of little

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

* N. 12758.

LEWIS HARCOURT, F.C.S., M.P.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.

Med. & San.

little assistance to him in investigating cases of sickness.

3. His difficulties appear to have been caused by an unfortunate sequence of events rather than from any unwillingness to comply with his requests.

etc
I have the honor to be,

Yr,

Your humble, obedient servant,

W. M. Mason

in the GOVERNOR'S absence

INCLOSURE

16

In Despatch No. 50 of 1914

24855

8 JUL 14

May 26th 1914.

24/719.

Sir,

Epidemic of Cerebro spinal Meningitis in Kitesh district, and other, plague, Maragoli district - North Kavirondo. Reports on by Dr. J. H. Thomson ref: your No. 3022 of 26th May with inclosure from Colonial office No. 373 of 26th April.

With regard to the report on the epidemic in the Kitesh district it is quite clear Dr. Thomson's investigations and report that disease was undoubtedly epidemic cerebro-meningitis.

The extension of this disease - which came via the Suk etc. more probably, unrec along the more frequented trade paths from south - from the foci in Ukambani and Kenya, was only what was to be feared from the epidemic nature of this disease. The report is evidence that Kavirondo and the country lying between that township and the lower slopes of Elgon, both to the North and North West of the mountain up to and across the Uganda frontier, has been swept by the epidemic. The disease has exhibited the

REPLY

The Hon'ble

The Chief Secretary,

M. S. G. S. S.

same selective preferences for certain areas, and earlier in the year it did in the Kenia and Ukamba centres, with a death rate estimated by Dr. Thomson at from 3 to 5% as against the 2 to 10% estimated for the worst districts in Kenia.

2. Plague in Naragali.

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Though the actual evidence as to the existence of plague is inconclusive, Dr. Thomson has drawn what I believe to be a very true picture of the plague possibilities of this thickly populated district. There is no doubt from what has been reported in the past that sporadic outbreaks of plague break out every year in one district or another, generally at the time of the rains, causing a circumscribed mortality which may or may not be sufficiently high, to have attention directed to it - a mortality which is undoubtedly due to plague and not merely to dysentery or malaria.

His remarks on the migration of the "black rat" and its connection with these outbreaks is very interesting, and deserves closer investigation when there is the staff to spare for the purpose.

The description of the attacks simply bears out the experience of Kisumu, with the prevalence of bubonic plague intermixed with the septicæmic and pneumonic forms.

3. As regards the difficulty of porters, the

lack

lack of police escort, and of interpreters incidentally alluded to in the course of his reports by Dr. Thomson, I have no doubt the District Officers concerned will be able to satisfactorily explain the chain of circumstances which added so largely to his difficulties. While I may be permitted to invite attention to the fact that to a 'new hand' such discomforts some as a novel and unpleasant surprise, they are none the less not the faults of the Administrative Officers concerned. For one thing it was unfortunate that Dr. Thomson's visit coincided with the Governor's progress through the same district. The difficulty of obtaining porters, short of being vested with all the outside signs and powers of the Government, yearly increases. Even the most energetic of District Officers cannot pick up reliable interpreters and headmen at a moment's notice, and a police escort and good headman simply means the whole difference to a safari. No Provincial Commissioner or District Officer would ever dream of touring his district without his police escort with or without an accompaniment of tribal retainers. But the staff is not big enough to admit of medical men inspecting their district being so equipped unless as a personal favour. The result is, they, wearing no distinctive dress, or with any policeman in uniform, to show that they are part of the Government

Government, with innumerable persistent questionings and probings of the intimate life of the people to make in order to arrive at some valid deductions of the object in view, have to rely on their own personality to induce the suspicious natives to believe that they are not settlers with some ulterior object in view.

At any rate Dr. Thomson was fortunate in being accompanied for one portion of his journey by the Assistant District Commissioner, a fact which about doubled the usefulness of his trip.

elc
I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. D. K. Lue

Principal Medical Officer.

24855

8 JUL 14

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INCLOSURE No 2

In-Despatch No. 554 of June 13/14

Encl. 2 in No

Reference No.

8/5.

Kisumu,

Nyanza Province,

9th June, 1914.

The Honourable

The Ag. Chief Secretary,

N a i r o b i .Ref. Your No. S. 8029. June 1st, 1914. Re Epidemic of
plague in Maragoli.With enclosures.

No one here seems to be quite clear as to what really happened in connection with Dr. Thomson's journey. I attach hereto copy of letter with enclosures sent to me by District Commissioner, Kisumu.

8/14
1914

I will notice that the District Commissioner states you had the services of an interpreter. This man was able to speak the native language and Swahili. I anticipate that Dr. Thomson's knowledge of Swahili would be very limited. We have no English speaking interpreters.

I understand that at the time of Dr. Thomson's departure from Kisumu the Police were very much under strength, and no men could be spared. I think, however, that an effort should have been made to let him have at least two constables. Certainly, he should have been accompanied by Tribal Retainers: it was intended apparently that he should be so accompanied, for you will notice that the District Commissioner, Kisumu, wired to this effect.

4. I understand that Dr. Thomson left here on the 13th
January

January for Mumias where he appears to have completed his investigations on the 9th February and arrived at the Yala River on the 10th. I was myself apparently in his vicinity (Maragoli) on the 19th, but heard nothing about him. I met him on the 22nd in South Tiriki on my way, in company with His Excellency, to Kisumu. He complained to me then of the uselessness of the interpreter and of his difficulties in obtaining porters. In consequence of this complaint I left one of my personal attendants and a Tribal Retainer with him and sent word to the Chief to have carriers sent to help him to return to Kisumu. I understood that Dr. Thomson reached Kisumu with his loads on the 23rd February. The foregoing occasion was the first time I ever met Dr. Thomson, and it was also the first occasion on which I was made aware of the fact that he had had difficulties, but even then I was not aware of the extent of the difficulties beyond the matters I have mentioned. I suggested to Dr. Thomson that he should inform the District Commissioner on his arrival at Kisumu of his experiences with the interpreter. This, apparently, he did not do.

5. I would suggest that in some part the difficulties experienced by Dr. Thomson were due to his inexperience in the country. This, however, should have been appreciated here and particular arrangements made so that they might have been reduced to a minimum. I regret that all this was not done. I feel sure, however, that the neglect to do so was due entirely to an oversight.

6. Dr. Thomson, subsequently in Kisumu, informed me that he had failed to obtain any reliable information as to the existence of any cases of sickness and said that he attributed such failure more to the fact that he had neither Police nor Tribal Retainers with him. I certainly agree with him that he should have been provided with both. I

also think that it would have been better had he been accompanied by an Administrative Officer during his inspection in the Maragoli location.

JOHN AINSWORTH,
Provl. Commr.,
Nyanza

Provincial Commissioner.

Reference No.

1540/119/14

District Commissioner's Office,
Nyanza Province,

Kisumu 9th June 1914.

The Honourable,
The Provincial Commissioner,N Y A N Z Areference hour No. 5075 of the
8th instant, re labour forDr. Thomson.

I sent Dr. Thomson an interpreter. This man is a capable servant and I cannot understand why he did not assist Dr. Thomson. I was under the impression he had done so. At the present moment the interpreter is away and I also suffer from the disadvantage of not having received a complaint from Dr. Thomson on his return.

1. The cause of trouble undoubtedly was that, owing to quarantine, the District Commissioner, Mumbasa, did not allow his porters to cross the rails.

2. Dr. Thomson was, therefore, left at Yala without porters. His knowledge of Swahili was, I presume, very limited and there is no doubt that he experienced difficulties in getting porters daily, a task which would prove difficult to an officer of many years experience in the country.

4. I enclose a letter and two telegrams which will

show

4. Show that I complied with Dr. Thomson's requests.
5. How Dr. Thomson's difficulties occurred I am unable to say, as that gentleman did not communicate with me.

A. W. Thompson

District Commissioner.

R.

COPY.

Reference No.

525/205/14.

District Commissioner's Office,

KISUMU,

11th February 1914.


Dr. Thomson,

Medical Officer,

On Safari in Maragoli.

I send herewith Office Interpreter Chueya as requested in your telegram of yesterday.

There is a man called Maskini at Chief Shiva-chi's village, who is quite competent as interpreter. So that if you find you can manage with Chueya, please return him as he can ill be spared from this Office.


S. H. Posen.

Asst. District Commissioner.

~~COPY.~~

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TELEGRAM.

To D. C. Kisumu.

Will arrive Yalariver Tuesday. Please if possible,
send Chiefs ^{Return} ~~return~~ and interpreter there for South
Marugulá safari.

FROM THOMSON, MEDICAL OFFICER

MUMIAS.

Dated 9th February 1914.

TELEGRAM.

To, Thomson M.O. Munnias.

Tribal Retainer will meet you Yale River to
conduct to Shivachi's. at Shivachi's Interpreter will
await you.

27. HORNE.

D.C. Commissioner
District