

INTRODUCTION.

As the outcome of proposals made by the Lister Institute to the Secretary of State for India in September 1904 with regard to the desirability of the further investigation of some of the problems concerning plague, the Secretary of State in January 1905 placed the direction of such an enquiry and the administration of an annual grant with an Advisory Committee appointed by the Secretary of State, the Royal Society, and the Lister Institute acting in conjunction. This Committee was constituted as follows:—

Surgeon-General A. M. Branfoot, C.I.E., Chairman, President of the Medical Board, India Office.	} (<i>Representing the Sec- retary of State for India.</i>)
Sir Michael Foster, K.C.B., M.D., F.R.S., late Professor of Physiology, University of Cambridge.	
Dr J. Rose Bradford, F.R.S., Professor of Medicine, University College, London.	} (<i>Representing the Royal Society.</i>)
Colonel David Bruce, C.B., F.R.S., Member of the Advisory Board, Army Medical Service.	
Dr Charles J. Martin, F.R.S., Director of the Lister Institute.	} (<i>Representing the Lister Institute of Preven- tive Medicine.</i>)
Dr A. E. Boycott of the Lister Institute was appointed Secretary to the Committee.	

The first function of the Advisory Committee was to appoint a working Commission. They at once applied to the Government of India that the services of Major Lamb, I.M.S., and Captain Liston, I.M.S., should be placed at the disposal of the Committee as members of the Commission, and also requested the Lister Institute to lend the services of Drs Petrie and Rowland, Assistant Bacteriologists to the Institute.

The Committee were informed by the Government of India that the services of Captain Liston could be granted forthwith but that those of Major Lamb could not be spared at that time.

Dr Martin, by special leave of the Governing Body of the Lister Institute, proceeded to India at the end of March, 1905, and under his direction the work of the Commission was organised and commenced in Bombay during the summer of that year. Meanwhile the Commission was enlarged by the addition of Major Lamb, I.M.S., Captain Gloster, I.M.S., Assistant Surgeon Kasava Pai, Mr V. L. Manker, and Hospital Assistants P. S. Ramachandrier and C. R. Avari. On the departure of Dr Martin in October the direction was placed in the hands of Major G. Lamb, I.M.S.

The Commission in India is at present constituted as follows :—

George Lamb, M.D., Major, I.M.S., Director of the Pasteur Institute of India, Kasauli.

William Glen Liston, M.D., Captain, I.M.S., Member of the Staff of the Plague Research Laboratory, Parel.

George Ford Petrie, M.D., Assistant Bacteriologist, Lister Institute.
Sydney Rowland, M.A., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Assistant Bacteriologist, Lister Institute.

Thomas Henry Gloster, M.B., B.Ch., Captain, I.M.S., late Port Health Officer, Rangoon.

M. Kasava Pai, M.B., C.M., Assistant Surgeon. Lent by the Government of Madras.

V. L. Manker, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., D.P.H. (Camb.).

P. S. Ramachandrier, First class Hospital Assistant, Mysore Government. Lent by the Government of Mysore.

C. R. Avari, Hospital Assistant. Lent by the Government of Bombay.

The headquarters of the Commission is at the Plague Research Laboratory, Parel, Bombay.

The work which the Commission is at present undertaking includes epidemiological observations in the field as well as laboratory experiments, and is being carried on both in Bombay City and in two isolated villages in the Punjab. Attention is for the most part directed to a study of the epizootic spread of plague among rats, the precise relationship of the epizootic to the epidemic, and the modes by which the disease may be communicated from rat to man. The publication of the final conclusions of the Commission on these subjects must be necessarily delayed, since observations are in some instances being carried on continuously

throughout a complete period of twelve months, and even after this the analysis of the mass of epidemiological data obtained will occupy a considerable time. A number of contributory investigations, more or less complete in themselves, have, however, reached a stage when it has been considered advisable that they should be made public. It has, therefore, been decided to publish an account of them as a series of independent researches in the form of a preliminary report, without waiting for the full discussion of the conclusions to which they seem to point. Similar reports will be published subsequently from time to time.

It was in the first instance the intention of the Committee to publish each individual report under the names of those members of the Commission principally responsible for the work of that report. It was, however, found that the exigencies of the work in India necessitated so much mutual co-operation that it was difficult to assign individual authorship to the greater part of the contributions. In consequence, the publications of the Commission appear as the united work of the whole Commission.

The Advisory Committee desire to place on record their indebtedness to Lieut.-Col. W. B. Bannerman, I.M.S., Director of the Plague Research Laboratory, and to Dr J. A. Turner, Medical Officer of Health of Bombay. The unstinting way in which the resources of the Parel laboratory have been placed at the disposal of the Commission by Colonel Bannerman and the continual encouragement afforded to it by him have been of the greatest assistance. Dr Turner has rendered invaluable help by placing the whole mechanism of the Health Department at the service of the Commission. Without this cordial co-operation the epidemiological inquiries in Bombay City would have been impossible.

The Committee have also to acknowledge valuable assistance from C. M. King, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of the Amritsar district, and Major Browning-Smith, I.M.S., Medical Officer in charge of plague operations in the Punjab, in connection with the work of the Commission in the villages of Kasel and Dhand.