

PUBLIC HEALTH AT THE PRIVY COUNCIL 1805-6

by

FRASER BROCKINGTON

AT the turn of the nineteenth century little official machinery of public health was known to exist in Britain except the practice of quarantine, the first regulations for which had been promulgated in 1743,* the Naval Medical Service which Lind had established in the 1760's and the Commissioners in Lunacy under the College of Physicians established after 1774. The building of a lazaretto for the isolation of passengers and the airing of goods had been discussed in Parliament for fifty years; five thousand pounds had been voted for this purpose as far back as 1765, but nothing had been done (P.C. 1/3671). The Vaccination Board was established in 1808, ten years after the publication of Jenner's discovery. A need to establish central machinery had been emphasized by Richard Mead in his *Treatise on the Plague* in 1720 and this had been followed up by other writers, notably Richard Pearson in 1799 and again in 1804.†

The Proclamation establishing the Central Board of Health in 1831 referred to a previous Board which it was said had been established at the time of the Gibraltar Sickness in 1805.

The present study was conducted mainly in the Public Record Office among the *Minutes* of the Privy Council and among the *Annals* at the Royal College of Physicians. Twelve Privy Council *Minutes* contained extensive references and much manuscript data (P.C. 1/3637-3736). The information about the Central Board of Health in 1805-6 thus made available, considering the great distance of time, is surprisingly complete and it is now possible to describe in some detail a remarkable episode in public health history, in which the Privy Council and the College of Physicians acted in effective partnership. The *Minute Book* itself, however, if it ever existed, unlike that of the later Board of 1831-4,‡ has not been found. Searches have been made at the Public Record Office, Royal College of Physicians, the Greenwich Maritime Library, the Customs and Excise Library and the Board of Trade Library.

Events Leading up to the Central Board of Health 1805-6

To stimulate public action in the early part of the nineteenth century called for some calamity, a pandemic of mortal disease. This alone could command attention and stir the imagination when the common level of accepted endemic disorder was already so high.

* Customs and Excise Library.

† *A Second Statement of Particulars Relating to the Establishment of a Board of Health*, Baldwin, London, 12 September, 1805.

‡ Brockington, C. F., Public Health at the Privy Council 1831-4; *J. Hist. Med.*, 1961, 16, 162-8.

The occasion was the Yellow Fever which crossed the Mediterranean to ravage the southern parts of Spain just as the plague had crossed from Africa some seventy years earlier to the South of France to ravage Marseilles—providing the occasion for Richard Mead's *Treatise on the Plague*. This new calamity was called, in Britain, the Gibraltar Sickness. It was a real killer. According to Francis Milman one hundred thousand persons died in Cadiz;* in 1804, when despite quarantine measures the disease reached Gibraltar, 5,733 persons died out of a population of 15,000;† of this Sayer says: 'Sufficient is known of the symptoms and character of this disease to leave us no doubt as its having been the Yellow Fever of the West Indies.'

In the last days of December 1804, Sir Stephen Cottrell wrote on behalf of the Lords of the Privy Council to Sir Lucas Pepys, President of the College of Physicians, asking for the opinion of the College as to how best the infectious distemper might be prevented from extending its malignant effects and whether the Privy Council might have a statement as to what was material and proper to be known by the public at large on the subject of infectious complaints.‡

The College replied within a fortnight in early January 1805, arguing the case for quarantine in its strictest form together with special services for early diagnosis, treatment and isolation and a strict enforcement of the 'Cordon Sanitaire'. The Physicians wished to see the lazaretto, so long contemplated, completed. The College also advocated a Central Board of Health (*see* Appendix I, first letter of the College of Physicians to the Privy Council, 10 January 1805).

The Privy Council now asked for a detailed plan for the establishment of the Board, the cost and the authority with which it should be vested.§

The College recommended (5 February 1805) five Fellows of the College together with one Commissioner of His Majesty's Customs, one Commissioner of the Navy Board and one Commissioner of the Board of Sick and Hurt. They said it would be necessary to provide some place for the Board to meet in and likewise a Secretary whose salary ought not to be less than one hundred pounds per annum; they humbly recommended the Register of the College of Physicians as the proper person to fill that office. Whether any, or what remuneration 'may be thought proper for the members of the Board themselves' would depend so much on the duty required of them, and the time that was likely to be taken up in the execution of it, that the College felt themselves unable in the present stage of the business to form adequate judgement upon that subject.||

The Board was established according to this formula in 1805 and the following announcement appeared in the Gazette of May 1805.

28th May, 1805 Council Office, Whitehall.

His Majesty has been pleased to Establish a Board of Health to prepare and digest Rules and Regulations for the most speedy and Effectual Mode of guarding against the Introduction and

* Francis Milman's letter P.C. 1/3736.

† Sayer, *The History of Gibraltar*, 1862, pp. 481–2.

‡ *Annals of the Royal College of Physicians*, pp. 108–20.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 122–5.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 130.

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Spreading of Infection, and for purifying any Ship or House, in case any Contagious Disorder should unhappily manifest itself in any part of the United Kingdom, notwithstanding the precautions taken to guard against the Introduction thereof, and to communicate the same to all Magistrates, Medical Persons and others of His Majesty's Subjects who may be desirous, and may apply to be acquainted therewith.

The said Board to hold their meeting at Somerset Place and is composed of the following Persons viz., Sir Andrew Snape Hammond, Bart, Comptroller of His Majesty's Navy, President; Sir Lucas Pepys, Bart, President of the Royal College of Physicians; Dr. Reynolds; Sir Francis Milman, Bart; Dr. Hunter; Dr. Heberden, Fellows of the said Royal College; Sir Alexander Munro one of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs; Dr. Harness, Member of the Board for the Care of Sick and Wounded Seamen [P.C. 1/3654].

The Chairman of the Board was the Comptroller of H.M. Navy (at first Sir Andrew Snape Hammond, Bart., and later in succession Mr. Henry Nichols and Sir Thomas Beilby Thompson). Sir Alexander Munro served as a Commissioner of Customs and Dr. John Harness as Senior Commissioner of the Board for Sick and Hurt. There were thus six physicians and two laymen on the Board. The Secretary of the College, Dr. James Hervey, was appointed Secretary.

The advent of the Board was welcomed by the *Edinburgh Medical Journal* of that year, which recorded infinite satisfaction with this step to promote and preserve health, at least as concerned contagion; it was hoped to see the work extended to other objects and the establishment of local boards (*Edin. Med. J.*, 1, p. 383).

The College members including the existing President, Pepys (1804-10) and the future President, Milman (1811-13); all, as would be expected, were men of distinction in fashionable circles; each at some time worked under Royal patronage. John Hunter (1754(?)–1809)* was Physician Extraordinary to the Prince of Wales; Francis Milman (1746–1821) rose to favour under the patronage of the Duke of Gloucester and was styled Physician to the King's Household; Henry Revell Reynolds (1745–1811), Lucas Pepys (1742–1830) and William Heberden Jr., (1767–1845) were all called in at various stages in the illnesses of George III. What these fashionable doctors knew about the malignant fever is more difficult to determine. Hunter was at one time an army physician and appears to have served in Jamaica since he wrote *Observations on the Diseases of the Army in Jamaica, and on the best means of Preserving the Health in Hot Climates* (London, 1788); Milman claimed to have seen a lazaretto, no doubt when travelling abroad as a Radcliffe Travelling Fellow in 1771; Pepys, as Physician to the Army for many years, said himself 'he was not acquainted with the diseases of soldiers in camp or in quarters' (*Munk's Roll*, vol. II, p. 306). Pepys, in any case, according to Richard Pearson found it necessary to nominate two physicians to go to Gibraltar in 1805.

The Board probably met at first in the office of the Hawkers and Pedlars office in Somerset Place and perhaps later in the Hackney Coach Office as is suggested by the following pencil note.

* John Hunter took a degree of Medicine at Edinburgh, 12 September 1775.

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The Board consists of Comptroller of the Navy, as President, Senior Commissioner of Sick and Hurt, a Comptroller of Customs—Five physicians—without salaries—Secretary £100 per annum—a Clerk £50—Messenger 10/6d per week—No place of Meeting established but the Board have met in a room of the Hawkers Pedlars' Office, *upon sufferance*.

This want of an Office was likely to be remedied by the Board being put into possession of that of the Hawkers and Pedlars, an Office Mr. Pitt had in contemplation to abolish—at all events some better accommodation must be provided for the Board—perhaps out of the Hackney Coach Office [P.C. 1/3689].

These Offices disappeared later into the Stamp Office and Somerset House is built on what may have been their sites (*Knights London*, 1843, vol iv, p. 284).

The driving force behind this organization could have been either James Hervey the Secretary or Sir Francis Milman. James Hervey was at this time about forty-six years of age. He was elected Physician to Guy's Hospital in 1779 and practised in a dilettante fashion in Tunbridge Wells during the summer. He had private means and as Munk says was 'little solicitous of business'. He was Registrar to the College for thirty years (1784–1814) and as well as being Secretary to the Central Board of Health, he was also appointed Registrar to the Vaccine Board in 1808.

The leading light was however more probably Sir Francis Milman. Milman had unusual qualities. After returning from abroad as a Radcliffe Travelling Fellow during which he had been called into attendance on the Duke of Gloucester at Rome, he became Physician to the Middlesex Hospital and began a career as a fashionable doctor. Shortly afterwards at the age of thirty-three he took a degree in Divinity at Oxford, but quickly returned to pursue his career which led him to the Presidency of the College of Physicians at the age of sixty-five. At the outset, Milman had wanted to be President of the new Board; in a personal letter to the Lord President of the Privy Council he mentions that King George III wished him to undertake this but that the Duke of Montrose interposed in favour of Sir Lucas Pepys (P.C. 1/3736). As King George III and Pepys did not see eye-to-eye, the King had, Milman says, been obliged to appoint the Chief Commissioner of the Navy Board to the post. Milman may well have been responsible for the five lengthy reports which the Board produced. Certainly it was Milman who pressed for the Board to be made permanent and in putting forward this recommendation he suggested that it be purged of useless members and that he himself be made Chairman. He did not mince his words:

We are now five physicians [he said in 1806], A Commissioner of Customs and a Commissioner of the Transport Office.* The two latter at least may doubtless be spared . . . their attendance can be dispensed with . . . we should then be reduced to five in number, of which, if I must speak the truth, there are but three efficient members.

Although he did not mention Sir Lucas Pepys by name, Milman clearly included him among the unsatisfactory pair. Was the other Heberden Jnr. or Hunter?

* The Commissioner of the Navy Board had not then been reappointed.

Duties of a Central Board of Health

The first action of the Board was to put forward suggestions respecting the duties of a Board of Health. This was a lengthy document much of which was taken up with a closely reasoned argument that the first and chief duty was that of superintending the business of the quarantine, which it was suggested should be placed under 'the immediate inspection and direction' of the Board. This proposal to encroach upon the work of the Customs and Excise had appeared first in the reply from the College of Physicians, when asked to outline the functions of the proposed Board. Second, it was recommended that the Board should make regulations for separating the sick from the well, and third, that they might establish a worldwide epidemiological centre. (*See Appendix II, Duties of a Central Board of Health, P.C. 1/3646, 20 March 1805.*)

Two months passed before this important document was officially considered by the Privy Council, although no doubt it was the subject of discussion at dinner parties and in the corridors of the Council offices. On 20 May 1805, the Lord President, the Duke of Montrose, Mr. C. Greville, Mr. Bond, Mr. Rose, Mr. H. Addington and Mr. Vansittart met in the Council office, Whitehall. Their response to the particular suggestion about supervision of quarantine was unfavourable as the following Minute shows.

Their Lordships having considered the said suggestions with the attention which the serious nature of the subject called for, are of opinion that the Regulations of Quarantine as to ships arriving from abroad, and the due performance of Quarantine by them in the several stations fixed for that service in Great Britain can best be enforced by the Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs, under whose authority all the officers employed in the Quarantine Service act, and to whom the law has committed the superintendence of that service subject to such directions as they shall from time to time receive from His Majesty's Privy Council [P.C. 1/3654].

It was made clear that the exercise of duties respecting the revenue could hardly be properly conducted by officers who were 'in any degree or for any purpose under the controul [sic] of another Board'; nor would there be any difficulty, it was said, in arranging for the Commissioners of Customs who met daily and were in constant and regular correspondence with their officers to have the most effectual and ready means of watching over the due performance of quarantine.

The Privy Council, if they saw no cause for empire building at the expense of the Customs and Excise, none the less agreed wholeheartedly that the new Board of Health should concern itself with other forms of prevention—the question of how to treat infected goods; how to treat goods and passengers liable to quarantine; questions of precautions of all sorts to be taken on shore. The Privy Council were particularly intrigued with the suggestion that a Centre of Epidemic Intelligence should be established. Nothing of this sort existed at that time and it appears to have preceded l'Office Internationale d'Hygiène Publique in Paris by rather over a century (*see Appendix III, Minute of the Privy Council, 20 March*).

There was an immediate and favourable exchange of correspondence in

connection with the establishment of an epidemic intelligence centre, with the Lords of the Admiralty, with the Army and with Lord Castlereagh, Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department (P.C. 1/3662); although there was, in the first place, some objection by Lord Mulgrave to correspondence with His Majesty's Consuls abroad (P.C. 1/3724). Somewhat later Lord Castlereagh agreed to the Board of Health corresponding with Consuls on the Coast of Barbary (P.C. 1/3666).

The Board drafted a letter to be sent to Governors and Consuls 'situated beyond the limits of Europe on the subject of contagion and epidemic disease'. This letter, which was received by the Privy Council on 20 September 1805 (P.C. 1/3668) read as follows:

Board of Health,
Somerset Place.

Sir,

Agreeably to the Instructions received from His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, we are authorised to request that you give immediate Notice, to the Board of Health in London, of any Disease that may spread among the people in those parts where you are situated. And, in order to procure the most useful and correct Information on this subject, we beg leave to direct your attention to the following Particulars:

- (1) What are the leading Characters and Symptoms of the disorder?
- (2) Where was it first noticed?
- (3) At what Time was it first noticed?
- (4) To what Places has it since extended?
- (5) In those Places where it has appeared, what Proportion of the Inhabitants have been attacked with it?
- (6) Of those who have been attacked, what Proportions have died?
- (7) What Methods of Cure have been adopted and with what Success?

We presume to suggest that answers to most of these questions might easily be obtained by applying to the principal Physicians in the District or to the Board of Health (if one be established there) or, to some of the principal Merchants and Inhabitants. And, to avoid the Errors which such matters are always liable, we would wish that Information should be called for from more than one source. We have further to request that so long as the Disease subsists in the Country, you will continue to send over frequent accounts of its Progress, together with any Circumstances which you may be able to collect upon sufficient Authority, and which are likely to illustrate its real nature.

We are Sir,

This draft letter was read on 20 September to the Privy Council who signified 'entire approbation of the steps proposed to be taken by the Board of Health'. The Centre of Epidemic Intelligence had begun its operations.

Two months later this far-flung correspondence was further reinforced by the despatch of 'short instructions for the general prevention of epidemical diseases' (see Appendix IV) together with the first two lengthy reports on the same subject.*

As far as can be ascertained the Centre of Epidemic Intelligence functioned

* The Board of Health First and Second Reports dated 30 April and 15 May 1805. The first was an outline of a plan to prevent the spreading of the plague, or other contagious diseases, presented by the Board of Health, agreeably to the instructions of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council. The second report without heading dealt with the nature of infection.

satisfactorily. The Board interpreted information coming from overseas and advised the Privy Council accordingly. On 7 November 1805 James Hervey wrote to say that from the information they had received of the appearance of Yellow Fever in some districts of New York and Philadelphia the laws of quarantine should be enforced in the strongest manner with respect to the crews and goods of all ships coming from affected places (P.C. 1/3671).

The Five Reports

Perhaps the best indication of the very high quality of this Board and of the hard work which it put in during its brief term of office was the fact that it produced no less than five lengthy reports. The first two were printed and widely disseminated. The first outlined a plan to prevent the spreading of the plague, or other contagious diseases. This report was based upon practices 'as far back as the time of Queen Elizabeth' mainly arising out of the plague from which the country had so long been free that 'it was in some degree necessary to recall the Mind to the Miseries inflicted upon a Nation by that greatest of all Calamities to which the Human Race is subject'. The chief preventive to be recommended was isolation of which several varieties had long been practised; for as they said, 'It is only necessary to keep at a certain Distance from those ill of the Disease, and from such Things as have been exposed to it, in order to avoid the Contagion.' With this admitted, everything turned upon the production of an efficient machinery for enforcing isolation; for this the first requisite was the authority of the magistrates, who would 'employ some physicians to examine into the Fact'.

Isolation was to be the first preventive; this, it was said, should be enforceable; isolation hospitals should be established, and doctors, nurses, messengers and watchmen were to be employed at public expense. The Board also recommended that local machinery for protecting health would be necessary once a town was 'declared to be infected'. The town, the report said, was to be divided into districts;

Three Justices at least in each District should meet daily for the Purpose of receiving applications for Relief, of Granting Certificates of Health, of providing for the Burial of the Dead, of conveying the sick to the Hospitals, of regulating the Supply of Provisions, of appointing different Officers and Attendants etc. etc. A Council of Justices should meet once in the Week or oftener, to consider of the best Manner in which their Resolutions can be carried into effect. They should also report to the Privy Council or to the Board of Health. It will be the Business of the Justices to appoint Examiners who may diligently enquire into the State of Health in each District. These Examiners ought to be Persons acquainted with Diseases, as Surgeons or Apothecaries.

We can see in these suggestions the eventual development of statutory Boards of Health. Had the Yellow Fever ravaged England, as did Cholera later, we might have seen an earlier development of local machinery.

The second report (15/5/1805) was a learned treatise on the nature of infection and upon the means to destroy it—surely a surprise at this early date fifty years before Pasteur's first fermentation studies and sixty years before

Lister's first experiment in antiseptic surgery. The report was objective; it recognized and acknowledged the great measure of its own ignorance. But it showed clearly an understanding of specificity if not of the true nature of infection or of the role of the vectors. It said:

Contagion and Infection are Terms, which express the Mode in which the Poisons are supposed to be applied to sound Persons; but by a common Figure in Language, they are often used to express the Poison itself, and such Poisons go by the Name of contagious and infectious, and what destroys Contagion in one Case, it has been inferred would destroy it in another; but there is no Foundation for this broad Conclusion. For Example's Sake we will suppose it proved that the Acid of Nitre or of common Salt would destroy the Poison of the Jail Fever; we cannot from thence infer that it would destroy that of the Measles, Small Pox, or the Plague.

The advice about certain actions to be taken in destroying what they styled specific poisons was definite: everything that could be should be *boiled*; everything that had been close to the infected person was to be *removed only with a pair of Tongs* or Forceps without handling; articles that could not be boiled should be fumigated in sulphur for twenty-four hours, to be followed by baking in an oven.

The third, fourth and fifth reports appear to exist only in manuscript form.* The third report dealt with Gibraltar itself on a special request from the Privy Council, and the fourth and fifth—possibly the most interesting in the series—dealt with health in the West Indies (P.C. 1/3637, 3666). In these we see the Board beginning to justify its existence by creative thinking about preventive medicine elsewhere than in Gibraltar. The West Indies with the exception of Bermuda and the Bahamas were centres of Yellow Fever. The young army recruit had no more than a fifty per cent chance of surviving a year after the journey out. The report reasoned that this enormous loss of life was unnecessary and that the preventive measures they had to recommend would be less costly than the cost of disease which 'covered the recruitment and transit of troops whose early death deprived the nation of compensating service'. All that was needed, the *Report* said, was for the Governors to cause surveys to be carried out in the islands, using the local knowledge of prominent citizens, physicians and surgeons, to determine the areas where this disease did not occur and to collect this knowledge and to act upon it by resiting service stations.

The fifth report provided the necessary heads of enquiries to be sent to the Governors of all British islands in the West Indies, with the exception of the Bahamas and Bermuda. These were designed to single out one or more stations for 500–600 men with a clean bill of health and freedom from Yellow Fever, together with all the necessary adjuncts in the way of adequate water supplies and access. The Governor, in fulfilling this duty, was asked to approach commandants, army physicians and surgeons, and respectable practitioners of medicine throughout the islands. The practical results of this advice appears to have been considerable in the resiting of army stations in Jamaica and elsewhere. The twinkling lights of Newcastle, sited at 4,000 feet above Kingston in 1806, remain a poignant testimony of this early period in our public health history.

* If they were printed no printed copy has been located.

Quarantine

The Board also played its part in making quarantine more effective. An early request from the Privy Council (6 March 1805) was that consideration should be given to the list of articles to be classified as Class I (i.e. most liable to infection and therefore the subject of quarantine) and Class II (little liable to infection, i.e. to be exempted) under Section 38 of the new Quarantine Order to be published on 5 April 1805. Sir Lucas Pepys and Dr. Reynolds were interviewed by the Privy Council on 12 March as the following Minute records:

... and the object of Section 38 of the Quarantine Order having been opened to them by the Lord President, and also the inconvenience to Trade arising from the Application of that regulation to all the articles comprized in the First Class mentioned in the Order, Sir Lucas Pepys and Dr. Reynolds were desired to give their Opinion whether any, and which of the articles enumerated in the said first class might be excepted; and the said articles being read to them they withdrew for a short time and then gave their opinion that there would be no danger in excepting out of the said Regulation the following articles, viz., beads, braceletts or necklaces in strings, books, hats, caps and bonnets of straw, chip or cane, horn and horn tips, liquor of any kind in bottles or flasks, lute strings, catlings or harp strings, maps, paper, parchment, plaiting of chip, cane or straw, vellum or whisks [P.C. 1/3646].

A subsequent letter on the same day (12 March) suggests that Sir Lucas Pepys and Dr. Reynolds had second thoughts in the matter, for they wrote to say that they thought there was no point in making the exceptions.

The Board was also approached on many questions about the detailed operation of quarantine and they gave immediate practical advice, e.g. that important papers belonging to a traveller who had succumbed during a voyage from a quarantinable disease should not be regarded as likely to carry any infection. The Board visited the site of the proposed lazaretto at Chetney Hill which, by this time, had been under discussion for half a century (P.C. 1/3671).

Final Stages

The Board did not last long possibly for the very reason which for us now makes the brief records of its history so intriguing, namely that it tried to be an effective organ of health administration. There were other empires of administration—as there always must be—jealously guarding their own frontiers; the question of cost would arise; and of course failure to realize the enormous significance to public health of such a step was an overriding factor.

In July 1806 Sir Francis Milman Bart., wrote from his address in Lower Brook Street to some person unnamed—probably the Lord President of the Council—asking for the Board to be made permanent and suggesting various reforms in its constitution. This was clearly a highly confidential document for, unlike any other of the manuscripts with which it has lain for a century and a half, it has no cover or other markings to indicate that it had been filed by the Secretary. In many ways it is revealing and helps us to understand the background to the Board's brief life (P.C. 1/3736).

Lower Brook Street,
July 5th, 1806

Dear Sir,

Whilst the Parts of the Mediterranean are shut and the Access to the Lazarettos at Leghorn etc. etc. etc., where Quarantine used to be performed, is cut off, the necessity of a Lazaretto in this country to guard against the Plague of the Levant is admitted on all Hands; but we are now assailed with a more dangerous, because a most insidious Pestilence, as it were at our Door, at Cadiz, at Gibraltar etc. etc., against which it is peculiarly incumbent on Government to take precautions in Time. Are Ministers aware of the great political, as well as Physical Evil, which the introduction of this new mischief might produce on its appearance. Your Ports would be deserted your Customs would be destroyed your Country like the neighbourhood of Cadiz where 100,000 Persons have perished, would be depopulated. In France, in Spain, in America, Boards of Health have been instituted with the greatest advantage, to watch over the Public Safety. If peace should be established, the Plague of the Levant may be guarded against by the usual Resources in the Mediterranean, but what security will they afford against the Pestilence of the West Indies and Gibraltar? To be useful, the Board of Health should be permanent. They should collect Information to enable them to ward off approaching or threatened mischief. The Reports which we have had the Honour to communicate to the Lords of the Privy Council will show the enlarged scale and the extended views with which this Business has been taken up by our Board, and I need only refer to our last Communication respecting Jamaica for the immediate Benefit in the saving expense we may render to the Public. With respect to the Constitution of the Board; nothing can be worse than its present form. It was always my opinion, that the President should be permanent. We have experienced the Inconveniences of the Office being attached to a Political Situation liable to change, such as the Comptrollership of the Navy. It was owing to pure Accident that such an appointment originally took place, you know the King himself spontaneously proposed to me, that I should be President of the Board, being the only Physician at it who had seen a Lazaretto, and tho' on account of the Importunity of the Duke of Montrose on behalf of Sir Lucas Pepys, His Majesty waved his gracious Intentions in my favour, yet he would not appoint Sir L. Pepys, but named the Comptroller of the Navy for the time being. So incompatible is it with that Office, that Captain Nicholl hesitated to accept our Chair and Sir T. Thompson has actually declined it. We are now five physicians, a Commissioner of Customs and a Commissioner of the Transport Office. The two latter at least may doubtless be spared; and Sir A. Hamond even proposed, that as they had large salaries from Government they should have no pay as members of the Board of Health. But their attendance may be dispensed with. The list of ships under Quarantine brought to us weekly by Sir Alexander Munro, may be sent by a Messenger from the Custom House, and when we want other Information from that Board we may apply for it by our Secretary, so likewise with respect to the Transport Office, where Dr. Harness has a Seat, we should then be reduced to five in number, of which, if I must speak the truth, there are but three efficient members. This I mention in confidence. With respect to appointments, the young Physician appointed to the Army has a Guinea a Day, and I think, Government can never put those at the Board of Health on so low a Footing. But I think four or five hundred Pounds per Annum, would satisfy them; and if the salary, whatever it might be, were allowed to commence from our first Incorporation as a Board, and from our first Occupation in the Business of the Publick, it would be a sufficient Remuneration for past Labour and Services. Still we are a Body without a Head. We should have a Person in the Chair not liable to be changed. Sir A. Hamond would make a very good one. He attended to the whole Progress of the Quarantine Bill of 1800. But if a medical Person be fixed upon, and I think the situation better suited to such a Character for many important Reasons, he may be chosen from among the five present Physicians at it. There is one you know among them, to whom the King has been, and is still decidedly adverse. Should Lord Fitzwilliams do me the Honour to propose me to His Majesty, I believe his Recommendation would not displease. At least I flatter myself it would not. The stipends I have mentioned above, I have reason to believe, are much less than those paid by economical America to Persons in similar situations in that Country. I will do

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myself the Pleasure of calling upon you at your office *next* that in case you should have any more questions to ask upon this subject I may be able to resolve them.

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Ever yours faithfully,

Fr. Milman.

Post or propter hoc, the end of the Board came quickly. On 8 August 1806 the Privy Council wrote to the King outlining the reasons why the Board should have been established, the important work which it had 'freely and cheerfully' undertaken and 'duly and diligently' conducted without emolument and recommending a sum of £500 to be granted to each of the original members and a further sum of £500 to be divided between Henry Nicholls, late Comptroller and Sir Thomas Beilby Thompson present Comptroller of the Navy for the time they had acted as Presidents of the Board. It was further recommended that since there was no unusual or infectious disorder prevailing on the Continent that further meetings of the Board should be discontinued (P.C. 1/3736). *See* Appendix V.

Some members replied in appreciative terms; Sir Andrew Hamond from Freshwater at Lymington, Sir Thomas Beilby Thompson from the Navy Office and Sir Alexander Munro from the Customs Office; Henry Nicholls writing from Albemarle Street said he feared that the remuneration granted for so short a period (6 March–25 June) might be productive of dissatisfaction in the minds of the original members.

It was now necessary to wind up the affairs of the Board particularly those which concerned the Foreign Department and the Army and the Navy. A letter therefore similar to that which had been sent to the members of the Board was now sent to Sir George Shee, Bart., for the information of the Secretary, Mr. Windheim, 'in case he should deem it necessary to give any further directions to His Majesty's Governors and Consuls in America and the West Indies, in relation to their correspondence with the said Board'. There is a pencil note that a similar letter should be sent 'to Mr. Marsden for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in case their Lordships should deem it necessary to give any further directions to the medical officers of His Majesty's Navy' and 'to Colonel Gordon for the information of H.R.H. the Commander in Chief in case His Royal Highness should deem it necessary to cause any further direction to be given to the physicians and surgeons attached to the British armies on foreign service'.

Thus was the episode brought neatly to a close and that which had given every promise of developing into a valuable and much-needed central health organization was quietly put to rest.

It is impossible now to gauge the feelings of the medical members, none of whom appears to have replied to the letter of dismissal, but it may well be that they shared the feelings of Sir Francis Milman. Indeed they took it upon themselves to draw up a final admonition to the Privy Council. This sixth and last report (P.C. 1/3739), signed by all members (Dr. Hunter only excepted, he

Fraser Brockington

being as it was said at Brighton) emphasized the need for the completion of the lazaretto at Chetney Hill, the importance of establishing healthy stations for His Majesty's troops in the West Indies, the need to determine what was the real nature of the fevers prevalent in the West Indies and the New World, and a strong hint that the epidemiological station which they had established should be continued. The report read as follows:*

Somerset House
4th September, 1806

Sir,

The Board of Health feel it their Duty, upon discontinuing their Meetings, agreeably to the Intimation received from the Right Honorable Earl Fitzwilliam through Sir Thomas Thompson, to request you will express to the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council their grateful thanks for the very flattering Attention that has uniformly been paid to the Representations which they have thought proper from Time to Time to lay before their Lordships.

The Board beg leave to say that they have faithfully discharged, to the best of their Abilities, the important Duties to which they have been called. And they are desirous at this Time of stating, for the Information of Their Lordships, the further objects in which they have engaged with the view of providing more effectually for the safety of His Majesty's Subjects both at Home and Abroad.

First. They cannot too earnestly recommend to His Majesty's Government *the completion of the Lazaretto*, long since begun at Chetney Hill; which is rendered of peculiar importance by the Liberty which is now granted to all Ships of coming immediately to this Country from infected Places; contrary to the practice of former Times. And it must be evident how great a danger may be incurred, if a Fleet should arrive with the Plague or other contagious Fever on board, before a proper Place is provided for their reception and purification.

Secondly. Another subject which they entered upon, in conformity with the Instructions of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, is *the Establishment of Healthy Stations* for His Majesty's Troops in the West Indies; where the Lamentable Mortality that has been occasioned, demands the most serious Attention. For this purpose the Board of Health, besides their printed Instructions, drew up certain queries, which have been sent to the several Islands with the concurrence of Their Lordships. And it is the earnest hope of the Board that this Business, which they have by no Means had Time to complete, may not be suffered to fall into neglect.

Thirdly. It has besides been a material Object of the enquiry with the Board of Health to ascertain, *as accurately as possible, the real Nature of the Fevers lately prevalent in the West Indies and some parts of the Continent of America*. For upon this must depend the necessity of obliging Ships coming from those Places to perform Quarantine; or the security of permitting them to land their Goods and Passengers free from this restraint—A more perfect knowledge of the Circumstances attending these Diseases might perhaps point out the proper distinction between those which are contagious and those which are not. On these subjects, though some Information has been received, yet much is still wanting—The deficiency may daily be expected to be in some measure supplied by the answers to the enquiries which have been made for this purpose.

Fourthly. The Board of Health have endeavored to carry into effect the Instructions of the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, *by establishing a Correspondence with His Majesty's Consuls* and likewise with the Physicians and Surgeons on Foreign Service; from which they hoped to receive timely notice of all epidemic Disorders, that may affect the Places with which this Country has intercourse. As it appeared that early and correct Information from Abroad would be the surest way both to prevent false Alarms, and unnecessary restraints upon Commerce; or, on the other hand, to put Persons upon their Guard in case any real danger were to be apprehended.

* Author's italics.

This letter was signed by W. S. Thompson, L. Pepys, H. R. Reynolds, Fr. Milman, W. Heberden, A. Munro, J. Harness, James Hervey, M.D., Secretary. With this gentle chiding Britain's First Central Board of Health ended.

APPENDIX I*

LETTER FROM COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS TO THE PRIVY COUNCIL (10/1/1805)

WE the President and Fellows of His Majesty's Royal College of Physicians in London, having maturely weighed the information contained in the various documents transmitted to Us by His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, and being deeply impressed with the importance and magnitude of the Subject referred to us, in which the health and lives of the People of His Majesty's Realms are so nearly concerned, beg leave to submit what follows as the result of our deliberations.

1. We are of Opinion that the disease which now ravages the towns of Malaga, Carthagen, Alicant, Cadiz, Leghorn and Gibraltar, is Highly Malignant; for although it has not (judging from the best information we can collect) the symptoms of the plague of Turkey and the Levant it possesses an equal, if not a greater degree of malignancy, destroying life in a shorter time, and proving fatal to even a greater proportion of those who are attacked by it. By the returns from Gibraltar it appears, that a very large proportion of the sick have died, and in the town of Medina Sidonia in Spain, in 1801, it is stated that of 1,200 sick, upward of 750 died. In Carthagen, 11,000 are stated to have died in a few weeks. The proofs of the malignancy of the disease and of its power of destroying human life, equal to the worst of pestilences, are full and ample.

2. *We are further of Opinion (judging from the information before us) that the disease is Contagious, and that the propagation of it has arisen from its contagious-nature.* On this Most Important point We have paid particular attention to every document, or fact, that could help to guide our Judgment. We find the disease making its first appearance at Cadiz, and spreading from thence to the neighbouring towns of Seville, etc. We find the belief of its contagious nature among the people on the spot manifested in the precautions taken to prevent its spreading, by cutting off all intercourse with infected places; and We find it stated, that these precautions have preserved some towns from the contagion and that the neglect of them has given Admission to the disease into others. Medina Sidonia is said to have preserved itself free from infection the first year of the fever, by proper precautions, but the second year, one quarter of the town was infected, from which however the disease was rooted out, before it extended to the other parts of the town. We lay the greater stress upon this fact, because Medina Sidonia was the first year supposed to be exempted from the disease in consequence of its situation being the most healthy in all that country; but this did not avail the second year. In further confirmation of the infectious nature of the disease, we observe that the towns that have suffered from it, are not such as are considered as unhealthy from situation, but, on the contrary, some of them are remarkably healthy, such as Cadiz, Medina Sidonia and Gibraltar, in all which nevertheless the disease has made great havoc, at the same time that other towns, much less healthy in point of situation, have remained free from this sickness. We find it has travelled chiefly along the coast, from one Sea-port to another, as is usual with contagious-diseases, and that it has spread more slowly to the inland towns.

Being therefore of Opinion that the disease is both Highly Malignant, and Contagious, We beg leave to represent the urgent necessity of immediately adopting such measures as may secure the People of these Realms from a Calamity, the magnitude of which is incalculable, were it to get into our Metropolis, our Naval-Arsenals, or our great trading towns, all of which are peculiarly exposed to the danger, from their constant intercourse, in the ways of trade, with

* The punctuation in this and the following Appendices has been somewhat modified.

many of the infected places. With this view, *We would recommend that the Laws of Quarantine be put in the most strict execution upon all Ships coming from Cadiz, Gibraltar, Malaga, Carthage, Alicant, or Leghorn, all which places are known to be infected,* and, we would recommend equal precaution to be taken, in the case of Ships coming from any of the intermediate towns, in the long line of Coast extending from Cadiz to Leghorn; for we are not sure that the disease may not have extended itself to many other towns, although we have not yet heard of it. We would also recommend the same precautions to be taken, in regard to Ships coming from Western Barbary, and that part of Africa opposite to Spain; for the disease sometime ago prevalent at Mogador, and along the African coast, is reported to be the same with that which now ravages the Southern parts of Spain. The interruption of communication, even in the case of a War, would not render less precaution necessary, for the intercourse through neutral ships would be equally hazardous; nor would the dangers from prizes be inconsiderable. We beg leave to repeat, that in a matter of such weighty concern, we think Ourselves called upon to state the strong necessity that exists for the most rigid execution of the Laws of Quarantine; and for this purpose, we beg leave to suggest the propriety of circular Letters being sent to all Magistrates, Officers of the Customs and Excise, Pilots under the direction of Trinity House, and all other Officers under the controul of Government, on the Coast. The Clergy likewise on the Coast might be intreated to exert their influence to obtain the earliest information of any Infringement of Quarantine. We would recommend that the places at which Quarantine is directed to be performed should be provided with a Military Guard, for effectually cutting off communication, and that everything be done to render the Quarantine as little distressing as possible to individuals, and that there be provided full and ample means of taking care of the Sick, whether such sickness be of a pestilential nature or not; for it must never be forgotten that in all pestilential diseases, if the precautions to prevent contagion occasion alarm, or fear of unreasonable hardships, they defeat themselves, by proving the cause of concealment, and of the transgression of the regulations though at the risk of life. We think it material to observe, that there appears no reason to believe, that the cold of our Climate would prove a Preservative against the contagion, for the disease has continued its ravages during the months of October and November, at Gibraltar, Malaga and Leghorn, although in those cities the temperature, in the month of November, must have been greatly under the heat of Our summer months; and, should the cold of our winter suspend the contagious distemper for a time, yet, in Spring or Summer it would manifest itself probably, as we know is the case in the Plague, and even in this disorder on the coast of Spain.

In Answer to that part of the Letter of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council which calls upon us to state the best means of preventing the disease from spreading, if it should unfortunately make its appearance in any part of His Majesty's Dominions; We beg leave to observe, that we have the most perfect confidence, that the careful and diligent enforcement of the Quarantine laws will secure the Country, and we have accordingly expressed ourselves most fully on that head. In what follows therefore, on the supposition of the disease actually appearing in the Country, we may be allowed to be more brief.

The first Object is, to take care that no time be lost in detecting the disease, and, for that purpose, all persons practising Physic in Sea-ports, near the Coast or elsewhere, should be directed (by Proclamation or otherwise, as may appear best to His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council). If they should meet with, in strangers, or persons lately arrived, a Fever with unusual or suspicious symptoms, to give notice to the nearest Magistrate, who shall order two others of the most respectable Practitioners of the place or neighbourhood, to visit the Sick, and report their opinion to him. This opinion he will forward to His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, if he shall deem it to contain Matter deserving of their attention.

The disease being supposed (however improbable) to have got into the Country, *the town or neighbourhood, in which it shall appear, should be immediately placed under a set of regulations approaching nearly to Martial Law, by which the Magistrate and the Military should assist in carrying into execution the measures adopted for cutting off all communication between the sick, and the well; or only permitting it on such conditions as shall be free from danger to the Public, and for providing at the same time complete and ample means of taking the best care of those affected with the disease.*

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That a System of this kind would secure the country from any extensive mortality we think is clearly proved by the successful measures taken to preserve the Army in Egypt from the Plague. However repugnant such a System of regulations, upon ordinary Occasions, might be to the People of these Realms, We have that confidence in the good Sense and information diffused through all ranks, that we have not the least doubt of their ready acquiescence in the measures necessary to avert so great a Calamity. But we think it so little likely that any plan of this kind will be required to be carried into execution—if the Quarantine Laws are duly enforced—that we are of Opinion, that it will be sufficient, at present, merely to provide, in the Metropolis and in some of the greater trading towns, single houses, in detached situations, to which any accidental case of the disease might be carried. We would further recommend, that there should be in readiness, to be sent to any part of the country, Medical Attendants, duly instructed in the best manner of separating the Sick from those that are well.

*For watching over the regulations of Quarantine, correcting them, where erroneous, perfecting them where deficient and being ready to apply remedies to any unforeseen Evils which may arise. We do not know what better to recommend than a Board of Health, with proper instructions and Authority.** Such establishments, we may be allowed to remark, have been found of the greatest use, in the sickness that has prevailed in the towns in North America.

If His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council should wish to have detailed more at length the regulations for the separation of the sick, it would be the Business of a Board of Health to furnish such detail, and to adapt the general regulations to all particular cases, and further to point out such things as might be material and proper to be known by the Public at large. We would strongly recommend that every exertion should be made for compleating the Lazaretto now building; for we are convinced, that it is essential to a due Performance of Quarantine, and that it is not possible to render the Public Health perfectly secure by the floating Lazarettos now in use.

Dr. Hervey
Registrar

LUCAS PEPYS
President
College of Physicians
January 10th, 1805

APPENDIX II

DUTIES OF A CENTRAL BOARD OF HEALTH (P.C. 1/3646)

1. The correct Performance of Quarantine being Universally admitted to be the principal Means of securing the Nation from the Ravages of Diseases of a pestilential Nature, the first Duty of a Board of Health would be to superintend and watch over the Quarantine, in all its different Stages. This is the more necessary, because we may be considered as young in our Experience, in this Country, in Quarantine-Establishments, and therefore a watchful Superintendance is particularly required at first, till all those employed have got a reasonable Degree of Experience in doing their Duty. *With this View of the Subject, it will be Matter of Consideration for His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, whether the whole Business of the Quarantine should not be performed under the immediate Inspection or Direction of the Board.** In that Case, it would be equally the Duty of the Board, to guard against the Evils that *might* happen, as to find Remedies for those that *had* happened. *If occasional References are only made to the Board, on the Subject of Quarantine, it is obvious, that nothing can be expected from Them, in the Way of Prevention or Precaution; and that the only Services They could render, would be to suggest the best Remedies for Evils after they had happened.**

It would obviously contribute to the Safety of the Public, and facilitate the Business of the Board, if the Laws of Quarantine were made to comprehend every possible Case, but that

* Author's italics.

cannot be expected; and there must be many Cases occurring that require Explanation, and Modification of the existing Laws. Of all such, full and correct Entries should be made on the Minutes of the Board, and also the Determinations upon them, to be referred to, in future, as Precedents, to guide the Board both in furnishing Information to His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, and in regulating their own Conduct. This appears necessary to give Consistency to the Proceedings of the Board.

If His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council should be of Opinion, that the Board may render good Services to the Country, by their Superintendance of the Quarantine, They will see the Propriety of directing Copies of all Papers, and Information, respecting Ships subject to Quarantine, which are sent to the Board of Customs, to be also sent Directly to the Board of Health. Whatever Measures may be deemed necessary to be adopted in consequence of the Intelligence communicated to the Board of Health, would be carried into Effect, through the Medium of the Board of Customs.

2. *The Regulations for separating the Sick from those who are well, (on the Supposition that the Plague, or other pestilential Disease should gain Admittance into the Country) would form an Object for the Board's immediate Consideration.* In doing this, considerable Assistance might be derived from the Regulations of former Times, particularly, from Those issued by the Privy Council in the Year 1603. If the same Powers are now vested in His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, as at the Time of issuing those Regulations, (which we believe to be the Case) the Authority appears ample and adequate to make Provision for every Exigency. How far the Acts of Parliament, granting the Powers exercised by the Privy Council in 1603, are now in Force, can be ascertained by a Reference to the Crown Lawyers. There have been several subsequent Acts of Parliament, with new Powers, and new Regulations, but they have been all made, we are informed, for a limited Time, and, upon their Expiration, the Old Acts revived. In the Regulations of 1603, everything is done by the Magistrate, and the Maintenance of the Sick is provided for by County Rates: there appears no Exertion of Powers unknown to the Constitution. Besides adapting the Regulations to the present Times and Circumstances, the Labour of the Board would be required to extend them to several new and important Points, which the Experience of two Centuries, and a more intimate Knowledge of Pestilential Diseases have made us acquainted with.

3. Besides the two-Heads above mentioned, of the Duties of the Board, One of which has for its Object, to keep the Plague out of the Country; and, the other, to check its Progress, and eradicate it; *there is another most important Duty of the Board; that is, To procure true and correct Accounts, from all Countries with which these Kingdoms have Intercourse, of any prevailing—epidemic—pestilential Diseases; in order that We may be upon our Guard, to prevent the Entrance of such Maladies, either into this Kingdom, or any of our foreign Possessions. There are various means, by which Information of this Kind may be procured: the Consuls in foreign Parts; the Medical Servants of the Nation, both in the Navy and in the Army; and also, the Correspondence of Men of Eminence in their Profession, in all Parts of the World.** The Uses to be derived from Information, collected in this Way, are manifold: It will be sufficient to give one Illustration. The Disease, that has committed such Havock in Spain, at Malaga, and the surrounding Country, has now prevailed for *five-Years*; if therefore, in the first-three or four Years, proper Information of the Nature of the Disease had been procured, can it be doubted that Gibraltar might have been saved from its Ravages?.

In addition to our Opinions of the Duties and Advantages of A Board of Health, We beg Leave to subjoin that of Dr. Russell, whose extensive Experience and great Knowledge on this Subject justly render his Opinion of the greatest weight. He Says,

Upon the Whole, there appears Reason for thinking, that the Management of Quarantine should be entrusted to a Council of Health, distinct from the Privy Council. Such a Board would be competent to enter into a number of Details and Discussions, which the Privy Council can rarely find Time for. It would be enabled, upon due Inquiry, into the commercial-Intercourse of the different States on the Continent, (so far as concerns their Trade, in Merchandise susceptible of Infection) to establish Rules adapted to their various

* Author's italics.

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Situations. Neither influenced by political Intrigue, nor misled by specious-Representatives of interested-Individuals, it would enter into a liberal and extensive Review of the Subject. Permanent Regulations would be established on solid Grounds, Measures would be concerted and provided for occasional-Exigencies, and the requisite Dispositions would be made, for carrying the preconcerted Measures Effectually into Execution. But, Business of this Kind ought not to be undertaken when Danger impends, and Resolutions must be passed immediately; it can only be transacted with Success, when there is full Time to investigate and to deliberate.

RUSSELL, book V, cap. 7, p. 466

20 March 1805

JAS. HERVEY, M.D.
Secretary

APPENDIX III

MINUTE OF PRIVY COUNCIL 20/3/1805 RELATING TO EPIDEMIC INTELLIGENCE CENTRE (P.C. 1/3654)

The Lords of the Privy Council are of opinion that the Board of Health may be most usefully employed in proposing Rules respecting the mode of airing goods—the disposal and method of treating the passengers and crews of ships liable to quarantine and other matters relative to the performance thereof, the suggesting measures of precaution on shore; such as recommending places for the reception of infected persons if any should land in this country—the mode of treating such persons, and the means that should be adopted, if unhappily all the care taken to prevent the introduction of the Plague or other Diseases of a contagious Nature into this Country should prove ineffectual. Upon all which points it will be for the Board of Health to offer their advice and opinion to the Lords of the Privy Council, and to Transmit without delay such suggestions and recommendations as the occasion may require, to the Clerk of the Council in waiting, for their Lordship's consideration.

To the Board of Health may usefully and properly be assigned the correspondence with our Colonies, to learn when any infectious Disorder shall appear in any of them, and what methods are pursued for the care of the same, and to prevent its spreading and likewise the correspondence with Foreign Countries for the purpose of obtaining early and accurate information respecting the Plague, or any infectious Disorder, breaking out in any part of the world and with professional men in such Foreign Countries, when it shall appear to the Board of Health to be likely to prove useful.

*It appears to Their Lordships to be proper also, that His Majesty's Consuls abroad should be instructed to correspond directly with the Board of Health, in case of the appearance of the Plague, or other malignant and infectious disorder, in the Countries where they are resident and Their Lordships will recommend to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to give Instructions to His Majesty's Consuls accordingly. And that similar Instructions should be given by the proper Departments of Government to the physicians and surgeons attached to the British Fleets and Armies upon Foreign Service.**

It is the intention of their Lordships that all papers and information respecting ships liable to Quarantine where any special circumstances shall arise; and all Information which may be received through His Majesty's Secretaries of State, or any other channel should be communicated to the Board of Health, as well as all Directions or Orders or such special circumstances given or made by the Lords of the Privy Council *relative to that service*, that the Board may have the fullest communication possible on the subject, and may thereby be enabled to submit to the consideration of the Lords from Time to Time such measures as may appear to them to be necessary. But the Lords reserve to themselves the Authority which the Law has placed in their hands of making such Orders and giving such directions as may eventually be necessary in cases not provided for in the Act of Parliament lately passed.

* Author's italics.

APPENDIX IV

SHORT INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GENERAL PREVENTION OF
EPIDEMICAL DISEASES (P.C. 1/3637)

1. Dry and airy Situations and high Grounds are to be preferred, for such have always been found the most healthy. This Observation is particularly applicable to the West Indies; but it is also deserving of Attention in the Formation of Barracks, Hospitals, and Camps, in every Part of the World.

2. Cleanliness is likewise of the first Importance to Health. For which Reason; it becomes expedient that Camps should not remain very long in one Place, especially in hot Climates. In Camps, or in Towns, every Species of Filth should daily be removed; and all unnecessary Crowding of Persons in close and ill-ventilated Places should as much as possible be avoided.

3. When there arises any Apprehension of infectious Diseases being introduced from other Countries, it will be proper to ascertain the real Nature of the Diseases which prevail in those Countries.

4. In case of Suspicion, a Quarantine should be instituted, prohibiting the Introduction of Goods till they have been properly aired; and obliging all Persons, who may arrive from infected Places, to separate themselves for a certain Number of Days. In the Plague 20 Days have been judged necessary; as it is believed the Disease always shews itself within that Period from the Time of its being contracted.

5. If the Plague, or other contagious and fatal Sickness, should break out, the only effectual Means of checking it, (and this is particularly to be noticed) is by separating the sick from those who are well. The earlier, and more perfectly this is done, the greater will be the Advantage derived from it.

6. In the Treatment of these Disorders, no Specific is to be relied upon: profuse Evacuations of every Kind, or an immoderate Use of fermented Liquors, are equally to be avoided. It is principally recommended to support the general Strength of the Patient, and to relieve any troublesome Symptoms that may arise.

7. A Journal of Practice ought to be kept; which should afterwards be transmitted to the Board of Health.

8. The Clothes, Bed, and all other Things, which have been exposed to the Poison of contagious Diseases, should be washed, whenever that can be done, or else fumigated, and aired, before they are again used: the Apartments also should be fumigated and white-washed.

9. The following is recommended as at once the cheapest, and the most efficacious Method of fumigating. The Clothes and other Things being previously disposed on Lines across the Room, two or more iron Pots should be placed in it, containing a Mixture of Sulphur and powdered Charcoal, in the Proportion of 3 Parts of Sulphur to one of Charcoal. These being then set on Fire, all Persons must immediately retire, the Doors, and Windows must be close-shut, and the Vapour confined for 24 Hours. The Chamber being then aired, the Purification may in slight Cases be considered as complete: but in Cases of greater Danger, the same Process should be repeated.

APPENDIX V

THE LETTER OF DISMISSAL (14/8/1806)

Council Office,
Whitehall.
14 August 1806

Sir,

I am Commanded by the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council to inform you, That Their Lordships have taken into consideration the important services rendered to the publick by the Board of Health, in the several Reports made by that Board upon the matters

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from Time to Time referred to Their Consideration by Their Lordships, during the Existence of the Fever which in the Autumn of the Year 1804, prevailed at Malaga, and other parts of Spain, and extended itself to the Town and Garrison of Gibraltar: and have thereupon thought proper to recommend to His Majesty that a remuneration of £500 should be granted to each of the Original Members of the said Board for the Service above mentioned. And a further Sum of £500 to be Divided between Captain Nicholls, the late Comptroller and Sir T. B. Thomson the present Comptroller of His Majesty's Navy as presidents of the said Board (ex officio); And His Majesty in Council having been graciously pleased to approve thereof His Majesty's pleasure has been signified to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury accordingly.

And in regard all Traces of the said Fever have long since ceased at Malaga, and the other places where it had prevailed, and that there does not exist at present any appearance of unusual or Infectious Disorders on the Continent of Europe: I am Commanded by Their Lordships to acquaint you, That Their Lordships have submitted their Opinion to His Majesty, That the meetings of the said Board should be discontinued.

I have the Honor to be

Sir,

Your Most Obedient humble Servant

STEPH: COTTRELL

*Sir Lucas Pepys, Bart.
Near Dorking
Surrey*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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