2. BURMA

In Burma changes have occurred in the health portfolio and other key administrative and technical personnel. Financial stringency has necessitated a drive for economy, and a five percent cut in the sanctioned budget allocations has been imposed. A temporary embargo has been placed on the filling of vacant posts and creation of new ones. The Government is, however, alive to the necessity of improving the standard of medical care and prevention of ill-health. With this in view, the National Health Council, a statutory advisory body constituted in 1950 has been revived. The question of harnessing the available manpower in the country to meet the need for trained personnel is being examined. Recently a National Service Act was passed.

At present the registration of vital statistics in Burma is more or less restricted to municipalities with a population of about 2.5 million, which is roughly 10% of the entire population of the Union. The reporting system has yet to be re-established in the rural areas. The latest figures for 1957 for the urban areas indicate that the improvements noticed during recent years in the reported rates have been maintained.

Considerable progress has been made in the programme of expansion of hospital facilities. A new out-patient department, a separate block for the clinical laboratory and x-ray and physiotherapy departments and a tuberculosis ward are under construction for the Rangoon General Hospital, and a new surgical unit was recently opened at the Ramakrishna Mission Hospital in Rangoon. Extensions are being made to the Mandalay General Hospital. A 200-bed hospital is under construction at Taunggyi. The plan for expanding existing district hospitals is being gradually implemented. Plans for the construction of a new Medical College Building at Mandalay have been finalized.

An intensive "clean-up campaign" has been launched in all the larger towns of Burma. In Rangoon, the former occupants of the slum areas have been moved to three satellite townships, in which it is estimated that a population of about 150,000 will be re-settled by the middle of 1959.

The management of the Burma Pharmaceutical Industry has been taken over by the Government, which has also assumed control over the import of all drugs into the country. A Drug Council has been established.
Aim of the project. To appraise the work of the venereal-disease control programme since the end of 1954 (when WHO staff was withdrawn and the campaign continued by national workers) and to determine how venereal-disease control can best be integrated into the public health services.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. A consultant for three months.

Work done. The venereal-disease control project in Burma, now being carried on by national personnel, was started in 1950 with the assistance of WHO and UNICEF as part of the joint maternal and child health/venereal-disease control programme. WHO staff was withdrawn at the end of 1954.

A short-term consultant was assigned by WHO in mid-September 1958 for a period of three months to assess the national control programme. According to his observations, the admission rate in the Rangoon clinics over the past four years for all types of syphilis cases had been reduced by 34% and that for early syphilis by 38%. Seropositivity among expectant mothers in the 16 maternal and child health centres had fallen from an overall 17.9% in 1951 and 13.5% in 1954 to 8% in 1957. Syphilis was as in the past more prevalent among the lower socio-economic groups. The incidence of gonorrhoea and non-specific urethritis had increased. Attendances and the general standard of diagnosis at the divisional clinics varied.

In his report the consultant recommended the establishment of a central venereal-disease administrative unit; improvement of diagnostic facilities in the clinics; establishment of a reference laboratory; development of a sound contact service; integration of some of the outlying venereal-disease clinics into other existing institutions; and establishment of a seamen's clinic in the dock area, in accordance with the Brussels Agreement.

His report has been submitted to the Government.

Aim of the project. To organize and expand the national tuberculosis service; to give lectures on tuberculosis to undergraduates and graduates at the Rangoon Medical College; to give further training to counterparts so that they may carry out both the above functions.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. Three regional fellowships - one for one month, one for two months and one for three months.

Probable duration of assistance. Until the end of 1962.
Work done during the year. The Regional Adviser on Tuberculosis visited Burma during the early part of 1959. He reviewed the position of the consolidation of BCG vaccination and made observations on the general matter of tuberculosis control. His recommendations have been submitted to the Government.

Three regional fellowships varying from one to three months were awarded to two medical officers and a public health nurse for study at the Tuberculosis Chemotherapy Centre, Madras.

Burma 20

School for Health Assistants, Rangoon

Aim of the project. To improve the training of paramedical personnel at the School for Health Assistants, Rangoon; to improve the method of employment and supervision of health assistants; to train a counterpart to take over the work of the WHO specialist.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. (a) Four regional three-month fellowships; (b) Supplies and equipment.

Probable duration of assistance. Until the end of 1961.

Burma 21

Strengthening of Health Education Bureau, Rangoon

Aim of the project. To strengthen the Health Education Bureau, Rangoon; to develop the health education programme in the Teachers' Training Institute; to train all categories of health personnel in health education; to improve health education throughout the country.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. (a) A health educator; (b) Supplies and equipment.

Probable duration of assistance. Until mid-1960.

Work done during the year. The Health Education Bureau moved to its new quarters, making it possible for staff members to work together as a unit. The Bureau has now been established in the Directorate of Health Services on a permanent basis.

The WHO and national health educators took part in teaching health education in pre-service training courses for different groups. They helped with (1) a one-month course for assistant health personnel from the districts, (2) a meeting on school-health education, (3) the preparation of the syllabus for a course in public health and health education for mass educationists (social workers), (4) a three-week course on school health education for primary, middle and high-school teachers in Moulmein, and (5) a course for students of the Burma Divinity School at Insein.
A considerable amount of field work was done with health personnel in Kachin and Shan States, in the Mandalay area, and in districts neighbouring on Rangoon city.

At the Aung San Myo Health Demonstration Centre, health education has been integrated into the training programme.

The School Health Education Council continues to assist in planning and co-ordinating the activities carried out in co-operation with the Department of Education.

**Burma 22**

**Vital and Health Statistics, Rangoon**

(Dec. 1955 - )

Aim of the project. To establish machinery for prompt notification of accurate statistical data; to improve the processing of the information and to train staff in statistical methods.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. (a) A specialist in vital statistics; (b) A twelve-month International fellowship; (c) Supplies and equipment.

Probable duration of assistance. Until the end of 1960.

Work done during the year. A comprehensive report on the recommendations for a new vital registration service for Burma, giving full details of all changes in procedures and new forms, has been sent to the Government for final approval. In the meantime, preparations are being made to implement the new system in the city of Rangoon.

The Annual Health Reports for 1955 and 1956, which were prepared in 1957 with the assistance of a WHO consultant, have been revised, supplemented and sent to the press. The project staff prepared a statistical appendix for the 1957 Report which was considerably fuller than that for previous years.

A number of ad hoc reports on the incidence of various diseases was prepared at the request of the Health Directorate. The statistician still finds it necessary to devote much of his attention to training the project staff in the accurate compilation and checking of statistical tables.

The medically certified deaths in Rangoon city in 1956 were coded and tabulated according to the International Detailed List, and the work on 1957 deaths is in progress. Although the quality of the certification is poor, the work has provided a means of training the staff in medical coding, and also a basis for evaluating the improvement in certification which it is hoped will follow the introduction of the International Form of Medical Certificate, and adequate instructions to the certifying physicians.

The work of the project is hampered by shortage of staff, which, for various reasons, has seldom been up to sanctioned strength.

An assistant statistician returned from a fellowship in England. The chief statistician has been accepted for an M.P.H. course at the University of Michigan, USA.
Aim of the project. To give post-graduate training to nurse tutors, public-health nurses and midwife tutors in order to meet the requirements of the integrated health services.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. (a) A nurse educator; (b) Two twelve-month international fellowships.

Probable duration of assistance. Until the end of 1961.

Work done during the year. The course for nurse tutors continued as planned and was completed in May 1959. Eleven students attended the course, and all were successful in the final examination. During the progress of the course, class and assignment schedules were followed and several field trips made. A programme of observation and practice teaching was arranged. The students were posted singly to various wards and departments of Rangoon General Hospital for practical experience in the clinical subjects covered by lectures. They attended two public lectures given by the United Nations Social Welfare Adviser and made two village trips with a team of workers conducting a nutrition survey.

Nurses' Day was celebrated on 17 December 1958, and the students participated in a panel discussion on health education in nursing.

The midwife tutor has been recruited and is expected to take up her assignment shortly.

Aim of the project. To upgrade the Departments of Pharmacology, Physiology and Preventive Medicine in the Medical College of Rangoon University, as part of a long-term programme for upgrading the Medical Faculty as a whole.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. (a) A professor of physiology and a consultant professor of radiology; (b) A twelve-month international fellowship and a two-year regional fellowship.

Probable duration of assistance. Indefinite.

Work done. The professor of physiology continued his teaching programme until October 1958, when he was transferred to another post. During his assignment, improved teaching methods and the tutorial system were introduced; a practical handbook was prepared and put into use, and a programme of research exercises instituted. A system of giving special attention to students who had failed produced better results in subsequent examinations. The block system of practical classes and supervised reading gained students' interest and co-operation. Additional work undertaken
covered special instruction in physiology for post-graduates under training as demonstrators in biology, and a course in laboratory techniques for the non-teaching staff of the Department.

The final report of the visiting professor in physiology was sent to the Government. Taking into consideration the overcrowded classes in basic medical subjects due to the uncontrolled admission of students, the high failure rate, and the inadequate staff, it may be said that the project had more than average success in attaining its objectives. It achieved a high standard of teaching in medical physiology and established a programme which should continue to produce satisfactory results. It is noteworthy that two counterparts received training abroad and returned during the operation of this part of the project.

The consultant professor of radiology made a survey of the radiological equipment at the Rangoon General Hospital and advised on its maintenance. He conducted courses of instruction for students, and paid special attention to the problems of radiation hazard in the x-ray department.

Both the professors also gave short courses in their respective subjects at the Mandalay Medical College.

Burma 30
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Development of Environmental Sanitation Division,
Ministry of Health
(March 1956 - )

Aim of the project. To develop and strengthen the Division of Environmental Sanitation in the Ministry of Health; to plan a country-wide programme in environmental sanitation; to develop a demonstration and training centre in the Aung San Myo area.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. A sanitary engineer.

Probable duration of assistance. Until the end of 1959.

Work done during the year. Efforts to develop the Environmental Sanitation Division were continued. A committee was formed to study co-ordination of environmental sanitation activities of the different departments interested. A proposal of this committee to form a Central Sanitation Board at the ministerial level has been submitted to the Government.

A decision has been taken to appoint personnel in the Environmental Sanitation Division on a permanent basis.

Attention continued to be given to the Aung San Myo Demonstration and Training Centre, and a plan for the extension of sanitation work to the satellite townships of Rangoon was prepared.
Aim of the project. To strengthen the Malaria Division of the Central Government; to train personnel; to plan and implement a malaria eradication programme for the whole country.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. (a) A malariologist, an entomologist and two sanitarians; (b) Two regional two-and-a-half-month fellowships and an international four-month fellowship; (c) Supplies and equipment.

Probable duration of assistance. Until 1967.

Work done during the year. Out of a total population of twelve and a half million in malarious areas, the spraying programme which started in February 1959 has a target of 9.55 million. Ninety-five field teams employing over 3,000 spraymen and 760 supervisors (265 temporary) have been operating in the field. Except for the Arakan coast, where dieldrin is used, DDT is used in all regions. Adequate precautions against the hazards of dieldrin poisoning have been taken, and so far no complaint has been received.

Malariometric surveys were continued. Training activities included the training of inspectors at the Malaria Institute, refresher courses on the identification of anophelines, and training of foremen and supervisors on insecticide spraying and surveillance procedures.

A review of the malariometric data collected during the closing months of 1958 tends to confirm the view that there is a low degree of malaria transmission in the country as a whole. In certain areas where spraying has been in progress for five years or more, there is evidence of an almost complete interruption of transmission, which made it possible to launch a programme of intensive surveillance from June 1959.

Co-operation from the Army Medical Directorate and Railway Medical Services is being enlisted to achieve the goal of eradication.

Aim of the project. To establish in the Aung San Myo area a pilot demonstration area where rural water supplies and excreta disposal will be improved; to devise simple, practical and cheap schemes for rural water supply and latrine construction; to provide services and facilities for extending sanitation to all rural areas; to train sanitation personnel.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. (c) Pumping equipment; (b) Assistance from the sanitary engineer attached to Burma 30.
Probable duration of assistance. Until the end of 1961.

Work done during the year. This project continued to maintain progress. A survey of intestinal parasitism carried out in two villages showed a high percentage of positive cases.

A construction programme of 45 and 47 latrines in the two villages respectively was undertaken. Work was completed in the first village.

In the rural water supply programme, construction of deep wells and reconditioning of old ones continued, with materials supplied by the Government.

Field training in environmental sanitation was given to twenty health workers in the project area.

In August 1958 the WHO sanitarian assigned was transferred. Another is under recruitment. Supervision of WHO assistance to the project was undertaken by the sanitary engineer attached to project Burma 30.

Burma 36

Public Health Administration, Rangoon
(March - Oct. 1955; April - Nov. 1956; Nov. 1956 - )

Aim of the project. To strengthen the administration of the Directorate of Health Services; to assess health problems and to co-ordinate the planning of health services.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. (a) A public health adviser; (b) Four regional fellowships - one for twelve months and three for four months.

Probable duration of assistance. Until the end of 1961.

Work done during the year. A public health adviser was assigned in November 1958. After studying the organization and administration of health services and the pattern of international assistance, he examined problems relating to rural health services, health education, leprosy, nutrition and medical education, paying visits to the Aung San Myo Health Demonstration Centre, to rural health centres, to Mandalay and to some other districts.

Recommendations concerning the organization and functional operation of the Maternal and Child Health Division of the Directorate were made, and advice was given on the structure of the Health Assistants' Training School. Lectures were given to health assistants undergoing orientation training at the Aung San Myo Centre.

Plans for a smallpox eradication scheme and for a study of filariasis have been initiated.
Aim of the project. To provide further orientation in health education to selected health workers and to persons responsible for teaching health education drawn from different districts.

Assistance provided by WHO during the year. Half the cost of board, lodging and travel of sixteen participants from outside Rangoon.

Probable duration of assistance. To be repeated in 1959-60.

Work done. A four-and-a-half-week national training course in health education for sixteen participants was started in Rangoon in December 1958. Included in the group were assistant health educators, child welfare officers and malaria workers. The course was conducted in cooperation with the Post-Graduate School of Nursing, the Environmental Sanitation Division, the School Health Education Council, the Mass Education Council, the Nutrition Division and the school health services. Arrangements were made for the trainees to obtain field experience at the Aung San Myo Health Centre. In addition to field visits and lecture-discussions, teaching methods such as puppets, role-playing, production of a radio programme over the Burma Broadcasting Corporation, etc., were used.

Fellowships

Nursing: Two twelve-month fellowships for study in New Zealand.

Leprosy Control: One twelve-month fellowship for study in India.

Tuberculosis: Three three-month fellowships for study of tuberculosis prevalence survey techniques in India.

Port Health and Quarantine: A four-and-a-half-month fellowship for study in Singapore and Hongkong.

Public Health: A ten-month fellowship for study in India.

Aim of the project. To assist the Division of Nursing of the Health Directorate in upgrading nursing and midwifery training schools, particularly the schools in district hospitals.
Assistance provided by WHO during the year. A nurse educator.

Probable duration of assistance. Until the end of 1962.

Work done during the year. The nurse educator took up her assignment in March 1959.

She assisted the Selection Committees in choosing students for the nursing and midwifery schools.

Visits were paid to training institutions in and outside Rangoon.

The need for adequate supervision of junior nursing staff members and students in training and for raising the basic educational standard for entry into nursing schools is receiving attention.