REPORT OF THE EXPERT COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGY AND QUARANTINE OF WHO

The Director-General has the honour to transmit herewith to members of the Executive Board documents WHO/EPID/16, Expert Committee on International Epidemiology and Quarantine of WHO - Report of first Session, and WHO/Q/24, Expert Committee on International Epidemiology and Quarantine of WHO, Quarantine Section - Report of first Session. These reports are noted on the provisional agenda of the third Session of the Executive Board (document EB3/1) under item 17.
REPORT OF THE EXPERT COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGY AND QUARANTINE OF WHO

The Director-General has the honour to transmit herewith to members of the Executive Board the revised text of the Report of the first session of the Expert Committee on International Epidemiology and Quarantine of WHO, Quarantine Section (WHO/E/24.Rev.1).
Radio-telegraphic epidemiological bulletins, issued by the Singapore Epidemiological Station, and relayed weekly or daily by a network of wireless stations, have for over twenty years proved of the greatest practical value to health administrations in countries bordering on the Indian and Western Pacific Oceans.

With a view to speeding up transmission of epidemiological information in other parts of the world, the Interim Commission (Off. Rec. WHO 7, p. 252-253) instructed the Executive Secretary to undertake the necessary preliminary studies; such was also the recommendation of the Expert Committee on International Epidemic Control (WHO/IC/Epid/8 Rev. 1 p. 4).

The preliminary studies on such a system of broadcast were completed in 1948 (WHO/Epid/13) and the question was examined at its first session by the Expert Committee on International Epidemiology and Quarantine which "agreed that the increased speed of traffic necessitated an increased speed for notifications and for world distribution of epidemiological information" and accordingly approved the initiation, on an experimental basis of a daily radio-telegraphic broadcast of an epidemiological bulletin by WHO at Geneva.

Final arrangements for this daily radio-telegraphic service were completed early in January 1949 and the broadcasts were initiated on 27 January 1949 through the transmitters of Radio-Suisse S.A., Geneva. The bulletin including 200 to 300 words, contains latest official information on pestilential diseases in maritime and airports, quarantine measures imposed or withdrawn and other data on epidemics of international significance. During the period from 27 January to 10 February, the bulletin included a summary of official information on the influenza wave in Europe.
Health administrations were informed of the existence of this experimental service by circular letters and by the *Weekly Epidemiological Record*. It is expected that early arrangements for regular reception of the radio-bulletins will be made by national health administrations and that their reports will allow an appreciation of the usefulness of this new service which may eventually permit a considerable reduction in the costly routine cables sent out by WHO. During the first 20 days of the new service reports on satisfactory reception of the messages were received from wireless stations located in 10 countries.

The radio-transmitters of Radio-Suisse S.A. ensure the bulletins reaching most countries at a favourable hour of the day. However, in order to increase the "coverage" of certain parts of the world and make the bulletin available at other hours of the day, it would be desirable if the bulletin would be rebroadcast by certain government-owned stations in various parts of the world, as is done now in the area served by the Singapore Epidemiological Station, for the latter's radio bulletin.

While a trial period of three months will allow an appraisal of the usefulness of the epidemiological broadcasts, a longer period of time may be required to enable a larger number of countries to make arrangements for reception and also to improve the service by rebroadcasts in areas not reached satisfactorily by the Geneva broadcasts.

It is hoped therefore that the Executive Board will approve the arrangements made so far and authorize the Director-General to continue them until the results of the present trial are fully conclusive.

For this purpose the Executive Board may wish to pass the following resolution:

The Executive Board
having considered the report of the Expert Committee on
International Epidemiology and Quarantine and noted the measures taken by the Director-General to initiate an experimental daily epidemiological radio-telegraphic broadcast for health administrations,
APPROVES
the continuation of this service for such a period of time as
may be required to obtain full information on its usefulness
to health administrations;

REQUESTS
governments to assist by retransmitting the bulletin free of
charge through wireless stations owned or controlled by them;

REQUESTS
the Director-General to continue the broadcasting service if
sufficient evidence of its usefulness to health administrations
is available and savings on individual telegrams sent by WHO
are thereby effected.
APPLICATION FOR WHO APPROVAL OF THE YELLOW FEVER VACCINE MANUFACTURED AT THE INDISCH INSTITUUT, AMSTERDAM

(in application of Article 36 (10) of the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation, 1944)

Prior to 1 December 1946 applications of the above nature were dealt with by UNRRA, the international body which, responsible between 15 January 1945 and 30 November 1946 for the administration of the International Sanitary Conventions of 1944, had inter alia laid down standards for the manufacture and control of yellow fever vaccine, with which standards all yellow fever vaccines intended for international use had to conform.

On 1 December 1946 the administration of the aforesaid Conventions was transferred from UNRRA to the Interim Commission of the WHO - such transfer having been determined by signature of the letters of transmission by the Director-General of UNRRA and the Executive Secretary of the Interim Commission on 22 October 1946.

Approval of yellow fever vaccines for international use, therefore, now lies within the competence of the WHO, such approval being contingent on the vaccines' conforming with the UNRRA standards referred to above.

Resulting from a decision taken by the Interim Commission at its Fourth Session (September 1947) and a recommendation made in the same sense by the Expert Committee on Quarantine in October 1947, all yellow fever vaccines, in respect of which WHO approval was to be sought, would in future require to be subjected to potency titration by two or more control laboratories, recognized for the purpose by the WHO under Article 36 (11) of the International Sanitary Convention for Aerial Navigation, 1944.

In the circumstances, when on 1 October 1948 the Director of the Indisch Instituut, Amsterdam, asked that the yellow fever vaccine manufactured there be subjected to the necessary tests, he was requested to forward, in containers provided by the WHO, samples
for potency titration to the three following laboratories: the Wellcome Laboratories of Tropical Medicine, London; the Biologies Control Laboratory, National Institute of Health, Bethesda; and the Laboratories of the International Health Division, Rockefeller Institute, New York.

Before consideration is given to the results obtained by the three control laboratories, it is of importance to note certain points: the vaccine is prepared from 17D virus; the seed virus used in production is derived from the Rocky Mountain Laboratory at Hamilton, where it has already passed a satisfactory monkey safety test; sterility tests and guinea-pig safety tests carried out on the finished vaccine have yielded entirely satisfactory results.

Results of potency titration performed go to show that in the opinion of the Directors of all three control laboratories, the vaccine should receive WHO approval for its international use, in view of its containing not less than 2000 MLD per recommended human dose - a content in excess of the minimum 500 MLD laid down for the satisfactory immunization of man in the Standards for the Manufacture and Control of Yellow Fever Vaccine, but an excess recommended in those Standards.

All members of the Yellow Fever Panel concerned with the laboratory evaluation of 17D yellow fever vaccines, viz., Dr. M. V. Veldee, Dr. R. M. Taylor and Dr. A. F. Mahaffy, to whom the results have been communicated, consider the vaccine to be in every way suitable for international use and recommend its approval by the WHO.

The Executive Board may wish to adopt the following resolution:

The Executive Board:

APPROVES for international use, the yellow fever vaccine produced by the Indisch Instituut, Amsterdam.