

can be done for the nation.

Knowing these things, we shall be criminally negligent if we do not prepare for a new kind of trouble more dreadful than any we have ever known.

The deadliness of Africa's malaria mosquito can scarcely be exaggerated. A scientist of the Rockefeller Foundation has warned us that one impregnated female liberated in the South could wipe out our civilization.

Do you doubt that any effort will be made to bring disease-carrying mosquitoes to our country? The Japs have already tried it in China. They are experimenting and learning.

Before this war ends - when the Germans and Japs begin to realize they cannot win - they will use every desperate and dastardly weapon that science can produce. Do you think them too humane to use disease germs?

Big officials will do nothing - and laymen will scoff - till it happens. But those who can had better be making plans to fight a new kind of enemy.

An Account of the 1942
Malaria Epidemic in India

By Sonia Tomara
New York Herald Tribune

In addition to the political and economic difficulties it has to fight today, the Indian government is confronted with a malaria epidemic which is taking hundreds of thousands of lives. It is interfering seriously with harvesting the rice and millet that now are ripe, and with work in the factories. In some villages around Delhi one in every four persons is stricken. This, I believe, is the most severe epidemic in years, and is

aggravated by the sudden stoppage of quinine imports.

The production in the United States of drugs to take the place of quinine is considered here to be one of the most important medical achievements of war. I began to hear about malaria as soon as I arrived here, but hesitated to write about it until I had all the data. It came in dribbles from official and unofficial circles.

The epidemic usually recurs every seven years. This time it waited nine years. The monsoon had been exceptionally long and the rains abundant, so that the rivers left their beds and flooded the plains of Punjab, Sind, Delhi and the United Provinces of Bihar, Bengal and Assam. In normal years 100,000,000 cases of Malaria are treated in all India and 1,000,000 persons die from it.

Higher Death Toll Expected

This year the figures are expected to be much higher. When the rains stopped the heat returned and the swollen streams receded, leaving vast marshy surfaces, which are ideal for breeding mosquitoes. The epidemic will last another month.

Ninety-seven per cent of the quinine usually consumed in India came from Java, and only 3 per cent is grown here in the Madras and Bengal provinces. Twenty-five tons of the existing stock have been taken over for the Army, leaving seventy-five to ninety-five tons for civilian use. The doctors complain of the shortage and inefficacy of the quinine.

The price of quinine, which a year ago was three rupees eight annas (\$1.15) for 100 tablets, has jumped to twelve rupees six annas, almost four times as much. Much of the drug has been withdrawn from the stores and

old in the black market at much higher prices. One tablet of atabrine, which is now considered more effective than quinine for a complete cure, costs 15 cents. Both prices cannot be paid by the poor, and it is the peasants living in the plains who suffer most.

In former times quinine was sold at a fair price at the village post-offices, but it has disappeared. To spread the existing stocks over a longer period it was planned to reduce the consumption of quinine by 25 per cent. It is no longer given as a prophylactic measure, except to troops who receive treatment before going to the front and again on their return.

Blow to Medical Authorities

The fall of Java has been a great blow to Indian medical authorities. Twelve hundred acres now have been planted in India with cinchona trees, which in three years will be old enough to be stripped and to yield nearly 42,000 pounds of quinine. It has been decided to adopt the Russian method of letting the seedlings grow for three years before stripping the bark. This differs from the method used in Java where only the bark of seven to twelve-year-old trees was used. Even after three years, quinine production here will be insufficient.

An order has been placed in the United States for 8,000,000 tablets of a synthetic drug called mepacrine and in Britain for 15,000,000 tablets of pamiquin. The American drug is coming at the rate of 1,000,000 tablets a month and the British 100,000 monthly. The Army will be supplied first. Little can be done under present conditions for the villages where the death rate is high. The fear of death is accepted by Indians with resignation as part of the karma, or fate imposed by previous incarnations.