

HONGKONG.GOVERNOR'S DESPATCH TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WITH REFERENCE TO THE PLAGUE.*Laid before the Legislative Council by Command of His
Excellency the Governor.*

No. 151.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
HONGKONG, 20th June, 1894.

MY LORD MARQUESS,

I had the honour to receive from your Lordship on the 16th June the following telegram:—"Keep me informed progress of bubonic plague. Send names of "any Europeans dying or attacked reporting number of departures and what "arrangements contemplated in Chinese quarter. What will be the effect on Finances. "Did plague originate in China and if so did you take any preventive measures "against its introduction. Telegraph reply."

2. I accordingly replied on the same day: "In answer to your telegram of 15ht "June total mortality to date 1,900. Latest statistical returns more satisfactory. "Ten British soldiers attacked. Two dead--Captain VESEY, Private GIBSON. Others "convalescent. Departures approximately estimated 80,000. Infected district closed "adopting necessary measures. Resumption intended. Commercial interests se- "riously affected labour scarce. Assistance from Imperial Government or issue "of fresh loan necessary. Bubonic plague endemic parts of China. Originated here "after drought for 7 months. Foul Bills of Health issued 10th May. All steamer "passengers medically examined. Will telegraph later."

3. Your Lordship will have received my Despatches Nos. 115, 116, 121, 122, 123, 127, 128, 129 and 132, and my telegrams of the 18th May, 2nd, 4th, and 16th June, in reference to the epidemic which has been in existence in this Colony since the beginning of last May.

4. At the risk of repeating some of the statements I have made in those communications it may be convenient to your Lordship that I should forward to you a narrative, disjointed though it may be, of the principal incidents that have occurred in connection with the plague during the last month.

5. On my return to the Colony from Japan on the 15th May, after 8 weeks' leave of absence, I found that Major-General BARKER, who had been administering the Government since the 30th April, owing to the sudden departure on account of illness of Mr. O'BRIEN, the Colonial Secretary, had issued a proclamation on the 10th May declaring Hongkong to be an infected Port in accordance with the provisions of *The Public Health Ordinance*, No. 24 of 1887.

6. A Permanent Committee of the Sanitary Board, consisting of three members, had thereupon been appointed, and these gentlemen who, in conjunction with Dr. LOWSON, Dr. PENNY, R.N., and Surgeon-Major JAMES, have since acted with extraordinary energy and efficiency, at once passed Bye-laws, and Regulations which I have already forwarded to you and which were without delay passed and confirmed by the Executive Council and ultimately legalized by the Legislative Council.

The Right Honourable

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON,

*Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State
for the Colonies,*

§c.,

§c.,

§c.

7. Hospitals were at once established (1) on board the *Hygeia*, (2) at Kennedy Town Police Station, (3) and, on the 20th May, at the Glass Works at Kennedy Town. The first *two* were managed by the Government doctors and the lady nurses from the Government Hospital, the latter was handed over to the Tung Wah Hospital Committee and worked by Chinese doctors under the supervision of the Colonial Medical Staff and a Naval Doctor (Dr. PENNY). It was deemed advisable to give the Chinese doctors a free hand at first. In any case it is difficult to persuade the Chinese to report cases of sickness, and their foolish and violent prejudices against Western medical men are quite sufficient to induce them, as they certainly did for the first fortnight or three weeks of the existence of the plague, not only to secrete their sick but often to desert their plague-stricken friends and relations after death.

8. Under these circumstances the necessity for a vigorous house to house visitation became most apparent and the Military and Naval authorities, Major-General BARKER and Commodore BOYES, at the suggestion of the Government rendered every possible assistance in this direction. Naval and Military doctors were furnished and at least 300 men from the Shropshire Regiment, and officers and men from the Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery detachments were amongst others detailed for the duty of house to house visitation and for cleaning and disinfecting the houses in which cases of the plague had occurred.

9. At this time, about the 21st May, the greatest dissatisfaction was shewn by the Chinese community in regard to the methods of sanitation we were employing. Complaints were made that the privacy of women's apartments was being invaded, that women and children were being "frightened out of their wits" by the daily visits of the Military and Police, and then it began to be rumoured that the "Foreigners" had sinister and unspeakable designs on the women and children.

10. On enquiry I found that these complaints were much exaggerated and that the majority of the Chinese, after being made to understand what the object was which the Government had in view, did not object to the visitation but even assisted those deputed to search their houses and to disinfect and cleanse them when necessary. A large deputation of Chinese waited upon me nevertheless, requesting that the house to house visitation should cease and that they might take their sick away from the *Hygeia* and the Kennedy Town hospital altogether. As already reported in my Despatch of the 23rd May, No. 121, I had to inform these gentlemen in pretty strong terms that Hongkong was a British Colony and, as they had chosen to reside in it, they must submit to British laws and methods of sanitation, and further that, as I was responsible for the safety of the community, I must positively decline to listen to their requests. I further pointed out to them that as residents of Hongkong it was their bounden duty to aid the Government in the terrible crisis in which it was placed and not to obstruct it, or to allow their people to obstruct it, in any way whatever. Though the deputation, composed of wealthy and so called educated Chinamen, left Government House apparently satisfied, in a few days' time defamatory and libellous placards were posted up in Hongkong and later on in larger numbers in Canton attributing the most ghastly cruelties to the English doctors, charging them in fact with cutting open pregnant women and with scooping out the eyes of children in order to make medicines for the treatment of plague-stricken patients.

11. Your Lordship will find it difficult to believe that after upwards of 50 years' occupation of Hongkong, and after more than 50 years of benign, not to say paternal, Government, Chinamen residents in this British Dependency could be found who were ignorant enough to believe such statements, and treacherous enough to give them currency. Such, however, is unfortunately the case.

12. As there had been some opposition to the Police in the Chinese quarter the day previously, and these statements were likely to inflame the passions of the mob, I immediately requested the Commodore to anchor a gunboat opposite to the Tung

Wah Hospital and Taipingshan, and Commodore BOYES at once moved the *Tweed* into the position I indicated. I also offered a handsome reward for any information which would lead to the arrest and conviction of the author of those disgraceful placards. There can be no doubt that these steps had a very salutary effect as no more placards have been issued here.

13. The epidemic a little later than the date of the above mentioned occurrence notwithstanding the heavy rains amounting altogether to some 23 inches was evidently on the increase. The exodus of panic-stricken Chinese was also on the increase, hongs were being emptied of their clerks, chair coolies by hundreds deserted their employers without warning, and many domestic servants applied for the amount of their wages then due to enable them to go to Canton or to join their families on the mainland. No less than 300 men left the China Sugar Factory one morning and crossing over to Kowloon started to walk to Swatow, a distance of 180 miles. At this time the admissions to the hospitals were 67, 70, and sometimes 80 a day, and the deaths in hospital and the dead bodies collected outside were on one occasion 109 in 24 hours.

14. When matters were at their worst I received information that the "literati," who were doubtless in a measure responsible for the dissemination of the disgusting statements respecting the medical men in this Colony, had recommenced operations in Canton. It was currently stated that if any portion of Taipingshan was burnt down as has been suggested an attack would be made upon the Consulate at Canton, and numerous defamatory placards involving not only the medical profession but the "Red-haired Barbarian" generally were being posted broad cast over that City.

15. With a view of stopping the anti-foreign feeling which was thus assuming serious proportions in Canton at the instigation probably of persons here I requested the Consul, Mr. B. BRENNAN, to seek an immediate interview with the Viceroy and to demand the contradiction of these libellous and malicious placards. The Viceroy I am bound to say with apparent readiness issued a proclamation which, as you will see from my despatch No. 125 of the 29th May, I did not consider sufficiently explicit as it was in far too general terms. I therefore requested the Consul to see the Viceroy again and to point out to him that in my opinion his proclamation was not nearly adequate to the occasion. The Viceroy thereupon issued a second proclamation which appeared more to the purpose but which coming too late had little effect on the already exasperated ruffians in his Province. The Registrar General then at my desire drew up a proclamation which was issued throughout Hongkong warning persons from giving credence to the lies which were current as to the treatment of patients and others in our hospitals, and stating in the simplest language what the treatment was, what objects the Government had in view, and how carefully and with due regard to Chinese customs (as far as the nature of the disease would admit) the corpses of their dead friends and relatives were disposed of. I have forwarded all the correspondence which has passed between the Colonial Secretary and Mr. BRENNAN on these subjects as well as subsequent correspondence respecting the brutal attack by the rowdies of Canton on two American Lady Missionary Doctors to Her Majesty's Minister at Peking requesting him to lay the correspondence before the Tsung-li Yamén.

16. It is to be hoped, though I fear such hope is not likely to be realised, that some strong repressive measures will be taken to prevent such outrageous proceedings in future in reference to the subjects of a friendly power.

17. On the 16th June the Consul informed me that the Viceroy had promised to assure the safety of the Consulates but that he could not be responsible for the conduct of the people towards foreigners in the villages, etc. outside of Canton and that therefore missionaries and foreigners had better keep themselves within doors.

Enclosure 1.

18. From time to time I have kept your Lordship informed of the progress of the plague, from which you will have learnt that there has been no considerable diminution in the ravages of the disease hitherto; but I am happy to state that the last returns are really more satisfactory, and sanguine hopes are generally entertained that the worst is at last over.

19. Owing to the number of persons it has been necessary to dislodge from the infected houses in the Chinese quarter, a number which is estimated at about 7,000, the Government has had to incur considerable and immediate expenditure. Numerous matsheds have been erected and Government has hired blocks of unoccupied buildings and godowns for the segregation and isolation of those whom it has been necessary to keep under observation. Upwards of 350 houses have already been condemned as unfit for habitation. These have been closed and walled in. A *cordon sanitaire* has also been established with a view of keeping persons from the infected portion of the Town—the Western District—from migrating to the Eastern District. Thousands of people, roughly estimated at 80,000 as I have stated in my telegram of the 16th June, have left the Island for the neighbouring province within the last month in every sort of marine conveyance—sampan, boats, junks and river steamers; and I am informed that persons have even walked on board the steamers at the wharves at Hongkong and have died before they reached Canton 8 or 9 hours distant.

20. On about the 12th of this month the Glass Works hospital under the management of the Tung Wah Committee became seriously over-crowded, there being some 200 patients in a building capable of holding about 100. Owing to the great scarcity of labour it was impossible to build refuges fast enough. The new building recently finished for a Pig and Sheep Depôt was about to be placed at the disposal of the Sanitary Board, and the staff of the Nethersole Branch of the Alice Memorial Hospital had offered its services to Government. In the meantime, however, and before these transfers could be effected the Directors of the Benevolent Hospital at Canton through the agency of the Viceroy requested that any sick Chinese subjects who might wish to go to Canton or desire in case of death to have their corpses sent to their native villages might be forwarded in specially prepared junks to that capital. Several of the compradores employing large numbers of clerks also requested that they might be allowed to move the sick wherever found to Canton, and they also gave a pledge that if that were permitted they would remain in this Colony and not take part in the general exodus. Failing that permission they would leave at once thus placing the Banks and houses of business in even a worse position than they were at the time the application was made.

21. After serious consideration I did not feel justified in acceding to these requests. It was true that the Chinese hospital was considerably over-crowded, that the Chinese doctors had not proved that they were capable of dealing with the plague, whereas there was no doubt that a compliance with the request would have more or less defeated the efficiency of the house to house visitation, and that cases of sickness would not have been reported to the Police as they were then and are now obliged to be. After consultation with my Executive Council the majority of Members agreed with me in thinking that as a tentative measure one or two large junk loads of sick Chinese subjects might be removed to the Benevolent Hospital at Canton on the following conditions:—

- (1) That the case of sickness had been reported to the Police.
- (2) That the patient had passed through the hospital.
- (3) That the patient expressed a desire to go to Canton.
- (4) That the doctors certified that the patient was fit to be moved.
- (5) That the junk or junks were properly provisioned, equipped, etc., etc.,
for the comfortable conveyance of such patients to Canton.

22. Four small junks were sent down and towed by a Chinese steamer, and some 170 patients were sent away on Thursday and Friday, the 14th and 15th. The Consul in compliance with my wishes sent a doctor to examine and report upon these junks on their arrival at Canton, and I am glad to say that his report is very satisfactory. Only 8 of the sick, as I am informed, died on the way up, and the remainder have been visited by the European doctors and are well and comfortably housed.

23. The congested condition of the Tung Wah Glass hospital was thus relieved, and it has now been closed. In its stead the new Pig Dépôt capable of holding 140 patients has been opened. The management of it has been taken over to a much greater extent than in the case of the Glass Works by European doctors, and the internal arrangements are carried on by European wardmasters and attendants.

24. It would be too much to say that the Chinese doctors are convinced their treatment of the disease is radically defective, but as our staff of medical men is about to be reinforced by two medical officers sent down by Admiral FREMANTLE from Japan, and by two others whose services I have secured, one from Swatow and another from Ningpo, we are now in a position to assume charge of nearly all the patients that are sent to the several hospitals.

25. The hospitals at present in existence are:—

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| (1) The <i>Hygeia</i> , | for | 40 | patients. |
| (2) Kennedy Town, | ,, | 45 | ,, |
| (3) ,, ,, Convalescent,..... | ,, | 25 | ,, |
| (4) New Pig Dépôt, | ,, | 140 | ,, |
| (5) New Glass Works Matshed, | ,, | 50 | ,, |

26. The last of these is under the management of Messrs. BURTON and BAILY of the Nethersole Branch of the Alice Memorial Hospital.

27. As to the origin of the plague numerous theories exist. It is true that in my Despatch No. 115 of the 17th May, I said—"Doubtless it has been introduced into Hongkong from Canton," this was the popular theory at the time, but further information leads me to the conclusion that it is impossible to speak definitely on this point and hardly safe to hazard a guess. Since the outbreak here it has been ascertained that the plague is endemic in Yunnan and Pakhoi. That it has been endemic in one or both of these places for the last seven years and that while it has been extremely severe in Canton, it has prevailed, according to His Excellency the Governor of Indo-China, all over the South of China. Hongkong receives a regular and constant supply of pigs for the use of the Chinese from Pakhoi and nearly all other articles of food are obtained from Canton with which this Colony is in hourly connection. The same may be said with regard to Macao, but it is a curious fact notwithstanding this frequent communication and notwithstanding the immigration of thousands of persons from Hongkong into Macao during the last month, not a single case of plague has occurred in that Colony. As your Lordship is perhaps aware Hongkong has recently experienced the most severe drought that has ever been known. With one exception, no rain fell between the middle of October, 1893, and the 16th May, 1894. It is, I think, very probable that the want of sufficient water—though the present storage capacity is 378,000,000 gallons—and the filthy habits of life amongst the 210,000 Chinese who reside here—though the new drainage system in course of completion was adopted as an improvement on the one formerly existing—has rendered Hongkong liable to the invasion and development of the germ of the bubonic plague. Having found a footing here the great danger is of course that, as in other parts of China, it may become endemic. In Dr. SHARP DEANE's report of 1891 on the health of Pakhoi, I observe the following statement:—"The Chinese are of opinion that the bubonic

“plague emanates from the ground and is favoured by a long continuance of dry weather when the earth becomes porous and numerous fissures appear on the surface facilitating the escape of whatever causes the disease.” These conditions prevailed to an unusual extent in Hongkong during the 7 months to which I have referred.

28. In this connection I may mention that the Japanese experts who have been sent here to diagnose the disease claim to have discovered the Bacillus of the plague and the medical staff admit the claim.

29. As to the effect of the plague it is felt in every branch of business and the loss to the public revenue, to bankers, merchants, shipping companies, the sugar refining industry, traders, shopkeepers, owners of property and the labouring classes can never be accurately determined. On the whole perhaps the shipping interests are the most affected. At this season the emigrants to the Straits Settlements have hitherto been counted by thousands per month, and the movements of passengers up and down the Chinese Coast, to and from Kwangtung and through Hongkong usually amount to vast numbers. Pacific Mail steamers leaving for Vancouver, Honolulu and San Francisco refuse to take Chinese passengers. The English, French, and German Mails refuse to take native passengers and the two latter decline cargo also, or even to enter the limits of the Harbour. Irregular liners avoid calling at the port altogether.

30. Considering the great importance of Hongkong as a shipping port it is only possible to conjecture what is lost by quarantine regulations against her in every direction which drive away vessels from her harbour, and deprive all, down to the humblest labourer, of their proportion of gain from the coaling, victualling, loading and discharging of the immense fleet which ordinarily frequents these waters.

31. Chinese hong merchants have retired to the mainland leaving their premises to caretakers and their commercial engagements in abeyance until the public health shall be restored. The effect of this is much felt by merchants whose merchandize is left on their hands beyond the contract time and many have had to call on their bankers to enable them to tide over the lock up of money. The bankers under such circumstances buy and sell fewer bills and they witness the contraction of all the ramifications of trade in which they have a financial interest. The turn over in sugar and sugar refining is reckoned not by thousands but by millions of dollars, and although happily not suspended it is for the moment crippled for want of labour. Landlords in the affected districts of the City receive no rents, and the natives generally in the midst of all their troubles find their necessary articles of food 30 or even 50 % above the usual price.

32. Without exaggeration I may assert that so far as trade and commerce are concerned the plague has assumed the importance of an unexampled calamity.

33. As to the “arrangements contemplated” I have to inform your Lordship that at a meeting of the Legislative Council on the 12th June, I briefly sketched the methods which the Government intended to pursue with a view of preventing a recurrence of such a catastrophe. I enclose an extract from that speech. The remedy is, as your Lordship will see, a very drastic one. It may result in the destruction and re-building of one tenth part of Hongkong. It will certainly necessitate the extension in every direction of houses fitted for Chinese occupation on improved sanitary principles. It will doubtless cause a general increase in rents, an increase in the cost of living as well as a general increase in the rate of wages. It will also necessitate the increase of the storage capacity of the Tytam Water Works so as to secure an additional supply of about 80,000,000 gallons of water. The expense to the Government of such sweeping alterations and additions it is impossible to estimate. As regards the existing drainage and water works and their completion and extension your Lordship will no doubt consult Mr. COOPER, the Director of Public Works, who is now on leave of absence in England and who can give you the fullest and most reliable information in respect to those subjects.

Enclosure 2.

34. In reply to my speech I may here mention that, on behalf of the Unofficial Members and the Community at large, the Senior Unofficial Member, the Honourable C. P. CHATER, promised that the Government should be loyally supported in all its endeavours to cope with the unfortunate dilemma in which the Colony is placed. That promise will, as I have inferred, involve the Colony in an enormous outlay the amount of which it would be at present rash to predict.

35. I may remind your Lordship that in the case of Mauritius the Imperial Government, about two years ago, came to the assistance of that Colony. I have no doubt that if I should hereafter appeal to your Lordship for similar consideration it would be generously extended to this Colony which is suffering in every direction from the terrible visitation with which it has been so suddenly overwhelmed.

36. The Government and the community, as I have stated in this Despatch, as well as publicly, is deeply indebted to the Military and Naval Forces and especially to the Colonel of the Shropshire Regiment for the great assistance they have rendered, and they regret the loss of one gallant officer, Captain VESSEY, and at least one Private, who have fallen victims to the plague. To Mr. FRANCIS, Q.C., Mr. MAY, Mr. MITCHELL-INNES, Captain HASTINGS, Mr. CROOK, Mr. TOOKER, and many other lay volunteers the Government and public are also under great obligations; indeed, I may say that several public officers and especially the medical staff and all the staff of the Public Works Department are doing additional duty unhesitatingly and ungrudgingly and with a single desire to aid in the repression of a fell disease the like of which has happily never before been experienced in this hitherto prosperous Colony.

37. In conclusion I have to express a hope that your Lordship will approve of my proceedings as described in this and previous Despatches on the same subject.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

humble Servant,

(Signed), WILLIAM ROBINSON.

Enclosure 1.

(Notice issued by His Excellency the Governor.)

Whereas certain bad characters have been spreading lying rumours regarding the treatment of the sick in Hongkong and the burial of the dead, this notice is issued to remove all doubts and suspicions and to bring comfort to the hearts of the people. Ever since the plague appeared in Hongkong, every effort has been made to cure the sick and many have been cured and hospitals have been established under Western and Chinese doctors, and people are free to go to what hospital they please. In the case of those who have died, they have been properly encased, and buried with every care in a cemetery specially selected for the purpose, where grave-stones are placed on each grave, with a number and the name of the deceased, so that his last resting-place may be easily recognised and so that his remains may not be neglected by his surviving relations. The Governor has also written to the Viceroy of Canton and some of the sick have in consequence been removed to the Canton hospital, they having expressed a wish to return to their native country. You people will, therefore, see from all these measures that my great desire is to benefit the people and to restore them if possible to health. Do not then believe lying rumours. The rascals who spread them will most certainly be severely punished. Take heed lest you also become involved in their machinations and repentance comes too late.

Enclosure 2.

(Extract from Governor's Speech to the Legislative Council.)

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However, if blame is to be attached to the Government in the past I am determined at all events that it shall not be attached to the Government in the future, and with this object I have asked the Attorney General to prepare a Bill the main principle of which I will endeavour to explain to you as shortly as possible. As stated by Mr. LEACH just now, that very able and energetic member of the community, Mr. FRANCIS, Q.C., has shown the greatest ability and energy in grappling with all the correspondence and many difficulties which have arisen out of this epidemic. That learned Q.C. has promised to assist in preparing a Bill which I hope will render a recurrence of such an epidemic as the one now with us impossible in the future. This Bill will of course be of a very drastic character. It will give the Government—this is of course simply what we propose—it will give the Government power to enter into immediate possession of, and pull down, and destroy, all dwelling houses and blocks of houses unfit for human habitation. It will provide that the Government shall at once resume the possession of all land on which such dwellings are built, paying of course compensation for so doing. It will provide that the Government shall have power to enter all houses now insanitary though capable of being put into thoroughly sanitary condition. Owners will be compelled to amend all such defects in the houses as render them insanitary. The Government will have power to re-survey and re-arrange all lots so taken, and open new roads and improve the old ones. Power will also be taken to enter and inspect all Chinese houses; such houses will be numbered and classified, and a fixed number of tenants will be allotted to each house and room, and owners will be obliged to enter into a covenant that that number shall not in any case be

exceeded; any infraction of that covenant will of course be followed by heavy penalties. There are naturally and necessarily many questions of detail, questions, for instance, of providing for those removed from infected districts, questions dealing with the rights of mortgagees and lessees, and questions of awarding compensation; but roughly speaking the main features of the Bill are those I have endeavoured to describe. With an Ordinance of this sort in force I need hardly tell you that Taipingshan and a great many streets not in Taipingshan will probably be razed to the ground and re-erected on proper sanitary principles. You will understand that such a measure as this affects many existing interests and will be of a very complicated character, and necessarily the Attorney General, even with the assistance of Mr. FRANCIS, will require some considerable time in which to prepare it. I can only hope, however, that he will not keep us long in suspense, for I think that the old adage "Strike while the iron is hot" is most applicable just now. I feel also certain that when the Bill comes before you, recognising the necessity for some very strong measure and realising the dreadful effect of the plague on the best interests of the Colony in the future if any half measures should be adopted you will give it your full and ready support. There is another matter connected with the plague which I may refer to, and that is the possibility of increasing our water supply. I suppose that drought to a great measure is responsible for this epidemic, and I understand that there is a large storage capacity available both at Tytam Reservoir and at Pokfulam, if the Council were to decide that the storage capacity should be increased. I may say that in my own opinion it will be no use giving a larger supply of water to the Chinese quarter unless it is distributed in a proper manner by responsible officials. What we want, as was well said in the paper this morning, is not so much a house to house visitation as a drain to drain visitation, and unless we can flush these drains regularly I am afraid we shall not get rid of the seeds of the disease. It would be retrograde of me to say, perhaps, that the separate drainage system was a failure, but I cannot help being of opinion that the proper system if it could be carried out for Chinatown would be the surface system (hear, hear) which is in force in the West India Islands where I have resided. There you see everything above ground, whilst here you do not see the dead cats, the dead rats, and old rags, that fill up the drains and cause such an intolerable and dangerous nuisance. I should be glad to know what the feeling of the unofficial members is in regard to the additional water supply. I should be prepared to call for reports from experts here if they considered it advisable, and I understand that for a moderate expense—\$70,000 or \$80,000—we could get 70,000,000 gallons more at Tytam alone. Before sitting down I think there is one other thing I ought to say and that is that I am sure the community at large and the Government feel most deeply indebted to the Military and Naval authorities for the gallant voluntary assistance which the officers and men have given to us and are still affording to us during this plague. (Applause.) They have thrown themselves into the disgusting and filthy work required of them with true characteristic British pluck, and one gallant officer has sacrificed his life in endeavouring to assist the community. I am quite sure that when the sad history of this plague is written one of the brightest spots will be that page which records how officers and men, numbering over three hundred in all, gallantly assisted us by risking their lives, with a view to saving the lives of thousands of others from whom they could never expect recompense, gratitude or even thanks. (Applause.) I fully endorse all that the Attorney General has said with reference to Mr. FRANCIS. I appreciate his help most thoroughly. I also wish to say that the Government is indebted to several public officers and lay volunteers, though the latter are not in such numbers as I should like to see, for the courage and energy they have shown in endeavouring to grapple with this disease. I hope, therefore, gentlemen, after what I have said, that you will be prepared to give the Government your fullest and most hearty support in any measure and in any action we may take not only to stamp out this plague but to prevent a recurrence of it in the near future. (Applause.)