

are endemic might result in a patient being landed during the incubation period before the disease has manifested itself. As the speed of aircraft increases, so will this danger become more evident. The Government intend introducing regulations somewhat on the lines of those applicable to vessels whereby passengers will be kept under surveillance until the incubation periods of these diseases have expired.

During 1936 only one flying boat arrived, but in 1937, 219 flying boats arrived disembarking 1,886 passengers.

Passport and Medical inspection is carried out at Berth 9 on the premises where the Southern Railway passenger boats from Havre regularly dock.

The local Airport, near Eastleigh, made arrangements to receive aircraft from foreign countries, and in conjunction with the Airport Manager, the Port Health Staff is informed of such arrivals, and the necessary arrangements are made to deal with the medical inspection of alien passengers.

The following table shows the number of aeroplanes arriving and departing at the Southampton Airport :—

	Aeroplanes.	Passengers.	
		British.	Aliens.
Number arriving ...	2,801	13,543	28
Number departing ...	2,814	11,693	2

At present no definite rooms have been allocated for medical inspection of aliens, but should the necessity arise one of the rooms occupied by H.M. Customs could be used.

This year one parrot arrived by air at the Airport and was seen in accordance with the Psittacosis Regulations.

Medical inspection under the Aliens Order, 1920, was continued as in previous years by the Medical Inspectors of Aliens. Special attention has been paid to those passengers arriving from Spanish ports, and to those who were coming to take up appointments and permanent residence in this country.

The main event of note that occurred in the Port during the year under review was the arrival of the "Habana" with 4,000 Basque children from Bilbao. I have included in this introduction a description of the arrangements that were made for the disembarkation of these children and their subsequent medical examination. I would like to thank my own staff and a number of voluntary workers, who so actively co-operated with the Department in facilitating the landing of these children with

the minimum delay, and I would also like to express my thanks to the Chairman and Manager of the Baths Committee for so kindly allowing us to use the Public Baths for the purpose of cleansing those who needed such treatment prior to being dispatched to the camp.

#### THE ARRIVAL OF S.S. "HABANA" FROM BILBAO.

The steamship "Habana" arrived on the 22nd May, 1937, at Southampton with 4,056 refugee children on board from Bilbao. I include in detail an account of the method of handling this large number of children on arrival.

It is, therefore, of some public health interest to record the procedure adopted by the Southampton Port Medical Service in dealing with this vessel, and the disembarkation of the children to the camp that had been prepared for their reception at North Stoneham, on the outskirts of Southampton.

The first official notification of the vessel's departure from Bilbao was received during the morning of Friday, the 21st May, when the expected time of arrival was given as late on Saturday.

Conferences had therefore to be arranged on the Friday and on Saturday morning with the Immigration and Customs Authorities, the National Committee for Spanish Relief, the Southern Railway, and the Shipping Agents, to discuss various details connected with the vessel's arrival.

On Saturday morning a wireless message from the vessel was received giving the state of health on board, and this message indicated that the children were suffering from severe sea-sickness. In accordance with Section 6 of the Port Sanitary Regulations, 1933, the Master of a foreign-going ship is obliged to notify by wireless, either direct or through his agents, to the Port Health Authority of an approved port the presence of any condition requiring their attention, and this message must be received not more than twelve and not less than four hours before the ship arrives in the Port Health area.

Instructions were given to the pilot to anchor off Fawley, in Southampton Water, and there await the arrival of the Port Medical Officer.

At 5 p.m. on the Saturday the "Habana," escorted by a British destroyer, was signalled off the Needles, and on receipt of this information the Port Health staff, accompanied by Customs and Immigration officials, left the Docks in the Port Sanitary launch to board her as arranged. Another launch followed with supplies of milk, glucose, meat extracts, and medical requisites.

It was an extraordinary spectacle to see a vessel, normally capable of carrying between 400 and 500 passengers, steaming up Southampton Water with every inch of her decks covered with human beings. Even more extraordinary were the conditions found on board. Children all herded together in the public rooms, in the alleyways, and on all the decks. Some lying rolled in blankets, others running about the ship screaming, and a few, cool and complacent, appeared to accept the circumstances of their arrival in a strange land, parted from their parents, without any emotion.

It was with some difficulty that we were able to reach the ship's hospital to see a boy of 12, who, later the same evening, was removed by launch and ambulance to the Borough Hospital for an operation on a strangulated testicle.

After consultation with the two English doctors who had made the selection and carried out a detailed examination of the children prior to embarkation, and who had travelled on the ship from Bilbao, we were satisfied that no infection of a major character existed on board, and therefore modified pratique was granted to the ship, permitting her to proceed to an inner Mooring Station next morning for a detailed medical inspection of persons on board.

Suitable accommodation had to be found for the purpose of carrying out this medical inspection, and this was no easy matter to find suitable accommodation with so many persons on board. It was, however, decided to use the two main saloons, which were roped off to provide two entrances, and one exit on to the main gangway. Details as to the situation of the Medical Officers' examining cubicles, the provision of screens and other equipment, were matters that had to be considered on this occasion.

After lying off Fawley for the night, the "Habana" steamed up Southampton Water to Berth 106 in the New Docks, at 8 a.m. on the Sunday.

Hundreds of the public, with Press representatives and photographers, had collected along the quay, but no person without an official pass issued by the Port Health Authority was permitted to enter that part of the quay or go on board. The names and addresses of all who were given these official passes were recorded, in order that the Health Authorities throughout the country might keep them under surveillance in the event of any major infection being discovered amongst the persons on board.

The gangway was fixed, and the medical, nursing, and sanitary personnel of the department proceeded on board.

Accompanying the children, there was one female adult to approximately every 20 children. It was, therefore, thought expedient to arrange for these adults to be examined before we commenced on the inspection of the children, in order that they might be instructed to marshal the children in groups of 20, as far as possible according to age and sex.

The saloons were then cleared of all, except those taking part in the medical and immigration inspection, and within half-an-hour the children were lined up in queues and the inspection commenced. Nine Medical Officers of the department, each in a separate screened cubicle, took up their positions in the line of the queue. A Health Visitor assisted each Doctor by stripping the children to the waist. The child was then examined, with special attention paid to an examination of the eyes for trachoma, the head for ringworm, lice or nits, the skin for rashes and lice. The heart and lungs were also examined in detail to decide on those fit to live under canvas.

On completion of the examination, each child was dressed by a Health Visitor and passed on in the queue to a Sanitary Inspector, who stamped the identification card attached to each child, indicating that the child had been medically examined. In addition, he also tied a coloured tape on the child's left wrist, which served as a code as to the destination of the child. White tape indicated "clean" and allowed the child to proceed direct to camp. Red tape indicated "verminous," and to proceed to the Corporation Baths for de-lousing. Blue for "infectious or contagious" conditions, to proceed to the Isolation Hospital or other institution. Blue and white tapes for any other condition requiring general hospital treatment.

After the medical inspection was completed, the child was passed on to the Immigration Officer, who stamped the disc with his official stamp, and the child then proceeded down the main gangway, at the foot of which Sanitary Inspectors and Health Visitors collected them into groups according to the colour of the tapes, and arranged for their immediate disposal in the following ways:—

Clean children went direct by motor omnibuses to the camp. Verminous children were taken in lorries to the Corporation Baths for de-lousing, and the Hospital cases were transported by the Corporation ambulances to the appropriate institutions.

The Medical Officers were surprised to find that the big majority of children showed no marked signs of malnutrition, although most of them had for months lived in Bilbao on fish and black bread, and had spent the days and many nights herded together in bomb-proof shelters.

The Public Medical Services in this particular province of Spain, according to the information obtained from the two English Medical Officers, is of a very high standard.

Many of the children were thin, but the general impression gained, especially before they stripped, was that they were, generally speaking, an alert, intelligent group of children, who compared favourably in physique with our own children. The clothing was generally very good, and removing the clothing of the verminous ones led to a great deal of weeping, when it was taken away from them for disinfection.

At the Corporation Baths we were allowed to use 40 of the slipper baths, and with the assistance of many voluntary and willing helpers, together with twelve barbers, 712 of the children were de-loused and fitted with a complete set of clothing, the latter supplied by the Spanish Relief Committee.

At 7 p.m., on the Sunday, medical inspection ceased for the day, the Medical Staff having worked continuously for ten hours, and we had disposed of 3,278 children. On the following morning the remainder were examined, and completed by 11 a.m.

My department received very great assistance from many voluntary workers, and the National Committee for Spanish Relief in providing transport, etc. It was only by the co-operation and hard work of all concerned that we were able to accomplish, what I believe is a record in the annals of the Port Medical Service, the detailed examination of 4,056 children in twelve hours.

The number of children who were bathed was actually 712. This also included the disinfection of their clothes. The remaining number were admitted direct to the camp and the Borough Hospital.

As a result of this large influx of children to the outskirts of Southampton, the Local Authority in whose area the camp was situated had only a limited amount of accommodation for fever cases. It was agreed that Southampton should provide accommodation for cases of typhoid fever and scarlet fever, if necessary, and that another Authority should be responsible for other infectious diseases.

It was also arranged that pathological specimens should be examined by the Pathologist at Southampton, and that should any typhoid fever cases be observed clinically, a specimen of the stool should be examined bacteriologically. If any non-lactose fermenting colonies were present, the case should be admitted

to the Isolation Hospital for further diagnosis, in order that the source of infection might be easily and quickly removed from the camp. Further it was arranged that children suffering from medical illnesses could be accommodated at the Borough Hospital.

The number of pathological specimens examined was eight blood examinations for widal tests, and one of these subsequently proved to be positive. Ten examinations of stools were carried out, and one was found to be positive as regards being a non-lactose fermenter. Two Wasserman reactions and two examinations of urine were carried out.

Of the cases of typhoid fever admitted to the Isolation Hospital, two were transferred from the Borough Hospital, having been admitted there as gastro-enteritis. The remaining five cases were admitted from the camp and Moorhill, and of this number two were not proved to be typhoid fever. These two cases were admitted because of the presence of non-lactose fermenting organisms in the stools. This was the arrangement made in order to have any suspicious case under observation as quickly as possible.

Of the eight cases admitted as scarlet fever from the camp, one, which was admitted on the 25th May, 1937, was not considered to be scarlet fever, as it gave a negative schultz-carlton reaction. Of the six cases admitted as diphtheria to the Isolation Hospital, two were definitely throat carriers, developing no membrane, but suffering only with a sore throat. The remaining four had clinical symptoms of nasal diphtheria, but these, following bacteriological examination, were not proved to be positive diphtheria cases.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee for their kindness and support, and also to the various Government and Port Officials for their ready co-operation with the department in carrying out the work entrusted to the Port Health Authority.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

*H. C. Maurice-Williams*

Port Medical Officer.