

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

C.H./Malaria/231.

HEALTH ORGANISATION

Malaria Commission

Geneva, March 27th, 1936.

The Secretary of the Malaria Commission, in agreement with the Chairman of the Health Committee, has the honour to communicate herewith an extract of a letter addressed to the latter by Professor C. SCHILLING, of the "Robert Koch" Institute, concerning the study of the malaria epidemiology of Ceylon.

Berlin, December 19th, 1936.
Föhrerstrasse, 65.

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I should like to draw your attention to the fact that the results of the observations made during the severe malaria epidemic of 1934-35 in Ceylon have, unfortunately, not provided so much scientific material as might have been expected in the peculiarly favourable circumstances. Too little work had been done beforehand. Epidemiologists cannot be satisfied with the practical lessons afforded from the standpoint of the prediction and prevention of similar catastrophes in Ceylon and in other places threatened by malaria epidemics.

None the less, Ceylon would be a particularly suitable subject for such investigations. It is densely populated, and administered by a European Power; it has many plantations, whose owners necessarily have an interest in the health of their work-people; up-to-date means of transport are available: From the psychological point of view the heavy mortality has certainly rendered the natives more accessible to measures of hygiene. The great point is, however, that malaria epidemics recur in Ceylon about every five years.

I should like to ask you to consider whether it would not be a fine as well as a practical task for the Health Committee of the League to ensure that the next four years are devoted to as far-reaching as possible an enquiry into malaria conditions in Ceylon. Then, if in 1939 or 1940 there is another increase in malaria prevalence - perhaps even on an epidemic scale - the armament will be ready for an immediate and effective campaign; and the experience of the preceding four years will at last have made it possible to ascertain exactly how such an epidemic develops.
