

Reports Conference with  
Mr. W. P. Markle and Mr.  
Sloss, Red Leaf Plantation,  
April 16, 1916.

MALARIAL INVESTIGATIONS.



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April 18, 1916.

The Surgeon General,  
United States Public Health Service,  
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to submit the following report of a conference had with Mr. W. P. Markle, President of the Holland-Delta Company, and Mr. Sloss, Manager of the Red Leaf Plantation, near Lake Village, on April 16, 1916:

It was evident that Mr. Sloss, the Manager, was very doubtful of any good results to be obtained by screening of the houses on that plantation, and, in addition, that the cost of the repairs necessary to render these houses screenable would amount to more than he would be willing to undertake.

The indirect benefit that could be secured through prevention of malaria was explained to him in all of its details, but he could not see how they could really benefit by expending moneys for improving the living conditions of the tenants. Great care was taken in explaining that an educational campaign would be conducted. He did not consider that the negroes could be educated to the proper use of screens. Any money expended must be for permanent improvements or necessary maintenance. The necessary repairs to make houses habitable would be done.

An inspection was made of seven houses in company with Mr. Markle, Mr. Sloss, Dr. Derivaux and Dr. Haas. The sleeping rooms of all these houses were found to have tight ceilings, fairly good floors and the walls papered, and with the exception of some minor repairs and closing up of some loose joints and openings, these were screenable at a reasonable cost. The work on double houses would entail more extensive repairs, but can be screened satisfactorily.

It was explained that screening of such buildings, or part of buildings, would only be undertaken where it was found practicable to do so; that the work of installing the screening would be done by our employees; that education in their use would be conducted and supplemented by personal supervision; and that quinine prophylaxis would also be used when thought necessary. A list of materials that it was expected the Company should furnish, was also submitted. The housing conditions on this plantation are, in fact, much better than on other plantations.

Mr. Markle spoke of the arrangements made for the medical attention of tenants and of his desire to employ a physician for the plantation. It seems that the Manager wishes to arrange to have Dr. Haas remain on the plantation, make the sick calls, and receive a percentage of collections for medical services, and the Company take its percentage as a commission, which they would then be willing to apply to improving the properties for protective work. Mr. Sloss, the Manager, could only see expenses and no benefit to be derived by carrying out the measures contemplated, unless the foregoing arrangement was made.

My understanding now is that the Company is willing to make some expenditures toward screening some houses, and is willing to have us carry out studies on the plantation and to use quinine prophylaxis.

I had seen that nothing had been done toward providing a place for establishing an office and laboratory and could see that such would not be provided unless Dr. Haas would serve as a resident physician. Accordingly, I have had Dr. Haas remove from Red Leaf Plantation to Lake Village as a base. An office was secured in the County Court House, rent free, through County Judge Clark. An inspection was made of four small plantations, having about fifty plantation houses, located along the lake front on a road from Lake Village to and through Red Leaf Plantation. The owners of these plantations are desirous of having antimalarial work done - one of them has indicated that he would rebuild and do all necessary repairs called for to make the houses habitable and screenable.

The demonstration work will now include these four small plantations and a part of Red Leaf Plantation of about fifty houses, leaving a portion of Red Leaf Plantation for the purpose of making comparative studies. The expenses, per house, under this new arrangement, will exceed that originally planned, but the total will be within the amount of the original estimate. The methods to be carried out will be:

- 1.- Quinine prophylaxis. Administration of quinine to a number of persons throughout the season.
- 2.- Mechanical protection through screening.
- 3.- Instruction of tenants in the destruction of mosquitoes in screened quarters.

The entire work will therefore be an intensive study of malarial conditions as existing on plantations, together with all the problems involved, as well as, in part, a demonstration of the effectiveness of the different measures as applicable to plantation life.

I ~~did~~ not consider it advisable to make any change of base of operations, because of the withdrawal of the original agreement regarding the work on Red Leaf Plantation, and for this reason sought to make the arrangements which would virtually carry out the original project.

I have to respectfully request that the inclosed copy of this report be furnished to Dr. Wickliffe Rose, Director General, International Health Commission, 61 Broadway, New York City.

Respectfully,

Surgeon.

VE/IR  
Inclosure