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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Finl DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	292.	Press.
B.P. No.		Mis.
Back No. (H1-42)		
Dated	21. 2.	1881. 197.

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

21st February 1881, No. 292.

Municipal-Sanitary.

Read the following paper :—

No. 41. *From Surgeon-Major M. C. FURNELL, M.D., F.R.C.S., Sanitary Commissioner for Madras, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Madras, 26th January 1881, No. 67.*

I have the honor, in anticipation of a more lengthy report which I am engaged in preparing, to call the attention of Government to the very insanitary state of many parts of Madras. I am induced to do so inasmuch as I see from the public prints that the Municipality of Madras have recently had an interview with His Excellency the Governor and, amongst other things, called attention to the lamentably insufficient allotment in their power to make for executing even the primary duties of sanitary conservancy.

2. I have been engaged during the past and present months from time to time inspecting different parts of Madras, and have on these occasions been accompanied either by Mr. Arundel, the President, or Mr. Jones, the Vice-President, of the Municipality, and it is but justice to these gentlemen I should mention that not only have I received every assistance in being shown the dirtiest and most insanitary parts of the town, but that they are fully alive to the defects existing and only too anxious if they had means at their disposal to remedy them.

3. I will briefly point out a few of these. Madras is divided, for Municipal purposes, into two principal divisions (North and South); each division is sub-divided into four sub-divisions, so that there are eight sub-divisions in Madras.

4. In the First Sub-division, the most northern part of Madras, is a place called the Tinnevely Settlement, where lives a large collection of people principally engaged in preparing the new paddy for sale in the markets. This Tinnevely Settlement is a collection of thatched huts as thickly placed on the ground as it is possible for human habitations to be. There is no drainage; no plan of streets or even lanes; you make your way by little narrow passages, more like gutters, around and between the houses. These passages are the places *d'aisances* of the community and thickly strewn with night-soil in every stage. Here and there are shallow wells from which the inhabitants obtain their drinking water. This place is notorious, I am informed, as the head-quarters of cholera and fever.

5. In this sub-division is another place we visited called Nagatha Covil Paracheri, which presents much the same features as the Tinnevely Settlement, but not quite so pronounced. This place is interesting as being the abode principally of the domestic servants of the European community. Many an obscure case of contagious sickness in the otherwise healthy quarter of the upper classes might easily be accounted for if we knew more of the dwellings of the servants.

6. In the Second Division, which I visited accompanied by Mr. Jones, the Engineer and Vice-President of the Municipality, a portion of the town has been laid down by drains on Mr. Jones' plans. As this scheme is, I am given to understand, before Government, it will be needless for me to make any remarks about it here, more than to observe it seemed to me a vast improvement on anything elsewhere in the town.

7. But parts of this division are in a frightfully filthy condition, and until the people themselves can be made in some sense to understand the insanitary state of their surroundings, all Municipal efforts would seem hopeless. In one house, 20' x 12', I counted ten buffaloes wallowing in their own dung, a small portion of the space being set aside for the human inmates, of whom there were four present. In another part of this sub-division was an open yard in the most filthy condition, in which some six or eight buffaloes were tethered. This yard was so situated that the urine and fluid faecal matter from it drained away into human habitations below. To my inquiry as to why this sort of thing was not summarily put a stop to, the Assistant Engineer assured me he had no power, and the Municipality could invest him with none.

8. In another portion of this division, called Yeddapalium, the houses are crowded with buffaloes, who seem to be the principal inhabitants, the human inmates occupying quite a secondary position as regards accommodation.

9. It would be a movement in the right direction if some large open space could be set aside for stabling cattle and thus freeing the houses. Until this is done all Municipal efforts in the way of drainage and conservancy would seem hopeless.

10. In the Third Division is a place called Vasapamode Paracheri, a collection of houses once, I am told, as densely packed as the Tinnevely Settlement, but which of late years has been opened up by the Municipality and drained. Its appearance now is in marked contrast to the other, and its reputation for sickness, once as evil as that of the Tinnevely Settlement, is as much improved as its appearance. I mention this place to point out what can be done.

11. The drains about Vasapamode Paracheri are neatly made and easily kept clean, but in other parts of this sub-division, notably in Armenian Street, the principal business-street of Black Town, where the offices of some of the most important Mercantile Firms are situated, the drains are in a shocking state of disrepair. The black fetid sewage at our visit was stagnant in them, giving forth the most repulsive and nauseating odours. The residents, however, seemed quite unconscious of anything offensive, and the bazaar people, whose shops are most of them situated over these seething sewers, were selling food and sweetmeats as unconcernedly as if in the purest atmosphere—verily habit is second nature. The Assistant Engineer, Mr. Smith, who accompanied me on this occasion, informed me that this state of things was brought about because not one single pie was allowed by the Municipality for drains.

12. The Fourth Division calls for no very special notice. It is not densely inhabited. A large piece of ground near the Powder Magazine is being filled up with the refuse sweepings of the town and the effluvia from this proceeding is occasionally complained of by the people around, but, when the ground has been converted as proposed into vegetable gardens, it would become an ornament instead of any inconvenience to its surroundings.

13. The Fifth Division includes Vepery, Pursewalkum, Egmore, and Choolay, &c. In parts of Vepery the smells from the choked drains, filled with a black sluggishly-oozing fetid fluid, are very bad. Most of the drainage is pumped into D'Mello's farm, and, mixed with water, serves to irrigate the grass lands there, but a portion finds its way into a large open tank near the People's Park, which gives forth a most abominable smell poisoning the surrounding air. Two sides of this tank are densely inhabited, and people may be seen taking home water from it for domestic purposes.

14. Through the old Choolay market was a large open drain, the most offensive thing of the sort I have ever seen. The Municipality have very properly forbidden human food, such as butcher's meat and fish, being sold here any longer. It is marvellous how, for so many years, it was permitted.

15. The Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Divisions I have not yet officially examined, but two of these are large open places well known to me and containing no very insanitary localities.

16. I have purposely made my letter as brief as possible, omitting all notice of the latrines, wells, public institutions, &c., which will be noticed in the more lengthy report alluded to above.

17. But I have said sufficient, I think, to draw attention to the sad necessity that exists for some active measures being taken for the sanitary conservancy of this large city, unless it is desirous it should maintain its now wide-known reputation of being the most insalubrious city of the world.

18. It would appear to me in the first place very desirable that a special Health Officer should be appointed, as is the case in Calcutta and Bombay, and as has been recommended by the former President of the Municipality and Sanitary Commissioner (*vide* G.O., No. 1618, of 28th November 1877), whose duties it would be diligently and constantly to point out what immediate remedies might be carried out to cope with the existing evil.

No. 42.

ORDER THEREON, 21st February 1881, No. 292.

Communicated to the President of the Madras Municipal Commission for his remarks; but before replying the President should consult the Advocate-General, the Inspector-General of Police, and the Commissioner of Police, Madras, as to whether too narrow a view has not hitherto been taken of the powers of the Commissioners and the Police under the existing law with regard to sanitation.

(True Extract.)

R. DAVIDSON,
Chief Secretary.

To the President of the Municipal Commission, Madras.

" Advocate-General.
" Inspector-General of Police.
" Commissioner of Police.
" Sanitary Commissioner.

Exd. T. O'Connor.

Govt. of (1881) Madras.
FINANCIAL.

To
THE PRESIDENT OF THE
MUNICIPAL COMMISSION,
Madras,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated February, 21st.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 21st February 1881, No. 292.

FEBRUARY.
Nos. 41-42.

Municipal-Sanitary. — Communicating for remarks, with certain instructions, letter from Sanitary Commissioner submitting preliminary inspection report on the sanitary condition of certain parts of Madras.

No. 67.

Office of Sanitary Commissioner
Madras January 26th 1881.

From

The Sanitary Commissioner, Madras.

To.

The Chief Secretary to Government.

Public Department, Fort Saint George.

Sir,

I have the honor, in anticipation of a more lengthy report, which I am engaged in preparing, to call the attention of Government to the very insanitary state of many parts of Madras. I am induced to do so inasmuch as I see from the Public prints that the Municipality of Madras have recently had an interview with His Excellency the Governor and, amongst other things, called attention to the lamentably insufficient allotment in their power to make for executing even the primary duties of Sanitary Conservancy.

2 I have been engaged during the past and present months from time to time inspecting different parts of Madras

Madras, and have, on these occasions been accompanied, either by Mr. Arundel, the Resident, or Mr. Jones the Vice President of the Municipality, and it is but justice to these gentlemen I should mention, that not only have I received every assistance in being shown the dirtiest and most insanitary parts of the Town, but that they are fully alive to the defects existing and only too anxious if they had means at their disposal to remedy them.

3. I will briefly point out a few of these.

Madras is divided, for Municipal purposes, into two principal Divisions / North and South /; each division is subdivided into four sub-divisions, so that there are eight sub-divisions in Madras.

4. In the 1st Sub-division, the most northern part of Madras, is a place called the Tinnevelly settlement, where lives a large collection of people principally engaged in preparing the new paddy for sale in the markets. This Tinnevelly settlement is a collection of thatched huts as thickly placed on the ground, as it is possible for human habitations to be. There is no drainage;

no

292/84 28
no plan of streets or even lanes; you make your way by little narrow passages, more like gutters, around and between the houses. These passages are the places d'aisances of the community, and thickly strewn with night soil in every stage. Here and there are shallow wells from which the inhabitants obtain their drinking water. This place is notorious, I am informed, as the head quarters of Cholera and fever.

5. In this sub-division is another place we visited, called Nagatha Coil Parachery, which presents much the same features as the Tinnevelly settlement, but not quite so pronounced. This place is interesting as being the abode principally of the domestic servants of the European community. Many an obscure case of contagious sickness in the otherwise healthy quarter of the upper classes might easily be accounted for, if we knew more of the dwellings of the servants.

6. In the Second division which I visited, accompanied by Mr. Jones, the Engineer and Vice President of the Municipality, a portion of the town has been laid down by drains, on Mr. Jones's plans. As this scheme is, I am given to

to understand before Government, it will be needless for me to make any remarks about it here, more than to observe it seemed to me a vast improvement on anything elsewhere in the town.

7. But parts of this Division are in a frightfully filthy condition, and until the people themselves can be made in some sense to understand the insanitary state of their surroundings, all Municipal efforts would seem hopeless. In one house 20'x12' I counted 10 buffaloes wallowing in their own dung, a small portion of the space being set aside for the human inmates of whom there were four present. In another part of this sub-division was an open yard in the most filthy condition, in which some six or eight buffaloes were tethered. This yard was so situated that the urine and fluid fecal matter from it drained away into human habitations below. To my enquiry as to why this sort of thing was not summarily put a stop to, the Assistant Engineer assured me he had no power, and the Municipality could invest him with none.

8. In another portion of this Division, called Yeddapalium,

292/53 P

Yeddapalium, the houses are crowded with buffaloes, who seem to be the principal inhabitants, the human inmates occupying quite a secondary position as regards accommodation.

9. It would be a movement in the right direction if some large open space could be set aside for stabling cattle and thus freeing the houses. Until this is done all Municipal efforts in the way of drainage and Conservancy would seem hopeless.

10. In the third Division is a place called Vasapamode Parachery, a collection of houses once, I am told, as densely packed as the Tinnevely settlement, but which of late years has been opened up by the Municipality and drained. Its appearance now is in marked contrast to the other, and its reputation for sickness, once as evil as that of the Tinnevely settlement, is as much improved as its appearance. I mention this place to point out what can be done.

11. The drains about Vasapamode Parachery are neatly made and easily kept clean, but in other parts of this sub-division

sub-division, notably in Armenian street the principal business street of Black Town, where the offices of some of the most important Mercantile firms are situated, the drains are in a shocking state of disrepair. The black fetid sewage at our visit was stagnant in them, giving forth the most repulsive and nauseating odours. The residents, however, seemed quite unconscious of anything offensive, and the Bazaar people whose shops are most of them situated over these seething sewers were selling food and sweetmeats as unconcernedly as if in the purest atmosphere - Verily habit is second nature. The Assistant Engineer, Mr Smith, who accompanied me on this occasion informed me that this state of things was brought about because not one single pie was allowed by the Municipality for drains.

12. The fourth Division calls for no very special notice. It is not densely inhabited. A large piece of ground near the Powder Magazine is being filled up with the refuse sweepings of the town and the effluvia from this proceeding is occasionally complained of by the people around, but when the ground has been converted,

292 48
Converted as proposed, into vegetable gardens, it would become an ornament instead of any inconvenience to its surroundings.

13. The fifth division includes Vepery, Puraawalum, Egmore and Choolay Vee. In parts of Vepery the smells from the choked drains, filled with a black sluggish-looking fetid fluid are very bad. Most of the drainage is pumped into D'Mello's farm, and mixed with water - serves to irrigate the grass lands there, but a portion finds its way into a large open tank near the People's Park, - which gives forth a most abominable smell poisoning the surrounding air. Two sides of this tank are densely inhabited, and people may be seen taking home water from it for domestic purposes.

14. Through the old Choolay market was a large open drain, the most offensive thing of the sort I have ever seen. The Municipality have very properly forbidden human food, such as Butcher's meat and fish being sold here any longer. It is marvellous how for so many years it was permitted.

15. The Sixth, Seventh and Eighth divisions I have not yet officially examined, but two of these are large open places well known to me, and containing no very insanitary localities.

16. I have purposely made my letter as brief as possible, omitting all notice of the Latrines, Wells, Public institutions &c, which will be noticed in the more lengthy report alluded to above.

17. But I have said sufficient, I think, to draw attention to the sad necessity that exists for some active measures being taken for the Sanitary Conservancy of this large city unless, it is desired, it should maintain its now wide known reputation of being the most insalubrious city of the World.

18. It would appear to me, in the first place very desirable that a special Health officer should be appointed, as is the case in Calcutta and Bombay and as has been recommended by the former President of the Municipality and Sanitary Commissioner / Vide L.O. No 1618 of 20th November 1877 whose duties, it —
would

292
would be diligently and constantly to point out what immediate remedies might be carried out to cope with the existing evil.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most Obedient servant.
M. C. Sumell.
M. D. F. R. C. S.
Sanitary Commissioner for Madras

I am, Sir,
Very truly
Yours,
M. C. Sumell.
Sanitary Commissioner for Madras

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1871

Mr. [unclear]
[unclear]

Mr. [unclear]
[unclear]

Sept 27
[unclear]

Mr. [unclear]

Mr. [unclear]
[unclear]
[unclear]

Mr. [unclear]
[unclear]
[unclear]

Mr. [unclear]
[unclear]
[unclear]

(1881)

Officer - Sanitary,
R.D.

From. 23 JAN 81

The Sanitary Commissioner
Madras.

To

The Chief Secretary to Govt.
Public Deptt.; Fort St George.

11/262/11

Dated 26
Despd 27th
Recd: 25 } January 1881.

N^o 67.

No: 225

Encl.

Subject.

Submits preliminary ^{Inspection} report on
the Sanitary Condition of Certain
parts of Madras.

Financial DEPARTMENT.

No. 225,

292/9

From

The Sanitary Commissioner, Madras
26 January 1881 No 67.

Submitting preliminary
Inspection report on the Sanitary condition
of certain parts of Madras.

FOR ORDERS.

11/262/11

31. 1. 81

Lead to Service (in)
for this purpose after
consultation with the Adm. Secy
& Ld. + (one) of Bd. of
Arch. & their present
powers. No. 5-0

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21st Feb'y/81, No 292

Order. Communicated to
the President of the Bd.

24/8/77 No 204-205-
28/4/77 No 1618.

municipal Commission for
his committee; but before
referring the President
should consult the
Admiral General, the
Inspector - General of
Police, the Commissioner
of Police, the Director,
the Attorney General, the
view has not with its
been taken of the powers
of the Commission &
the police under the
existing law with regard to
prosecution.

175281
15.2.81

To the President Head of the
Admiral General
Inspector General of Police
Commissioner of Police
Sanitary Commissioner

L & O - 400

Sealed
15/3

292
11

N 225

FOR ORDERS.

Don W. Henderson

(with order.)

c/p
h/p

Royally
Govt. of (1881) Madras.

Fuel



G.O., 21st Feb. 1881, No. 292

Nos. 41-42

Account in Lang. for
remarks - with certain in-
structions - letter from San-
itary Comm. submitting preliminary
inspection report on the
sanitary condⁿ of certain
parts of Madras.