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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Jiml DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. B.P. No.	H65	Press. Mis.
	Back No. 93-95	
Dated	18. 3. 1881. ~~19~~	

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

18th March 1881, No. 465.

Municipal—Sanitary.

Read the following paper:—

No. 93. *From Surgeon-Major M. C. FURNELL, M.D., F.R.C.S., Sanitary Commissioner for Madras, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Ootacamund, 27th July* 1880, *No.* 782 [*Current No.* 2016].

I have the honor to forward, herewith, my Sanitary Inspection Report of Ootacamund.

2. Something has been done to remedy, in the market for instance, the state of things I have described as existing when I inspected them; but, as it will be seen from Mr. Ellis', Mr. Ranking's, and Dr. Gordon's previous reports, that the state I found things in is not exceptional, I have deemed it better to let my notes stand as they are. It must be very evident that if this indifference to sanitation is allowed to continue from year to year, some epidemic disease, as we read is the case in Simla just now, will arise and destroy the fame of the sanitarium of Southern India. Indeed, it would have been almost an impossibility Ootacamund should have hitherto escaped, but that the houses are so far apart.

3. From what I can gather, from conversation with the Vice-President and others, it is deemed no one's particular duty in the Municipality to look to these matters; I would, therefore, venture to suggest, in accordance with the views of Government as expressed in G.O., 19th March 1880, No. 587, that one of the Medical Officers of this station should exercise the power of a Sanitary Officer.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

Inspection Notes of the Ootacamund Municipality.

Roads.—The roads of Ootacamund are very numerous. The principal are well kept and in good state of repair.

Conservancy.—The conservancy is very bad. I never remember Ootacamund so dirty. Almost everywhere one rides or walks a sickly smell of human ordure is perceptible. I will mention one or two places in particular. The west side of the Hill on which Shoreham is situated, and which is covered with brushwood of the "wattle," is simply a *cloaca;* not only as you walk down is there a strong smell of fæcal matter, but even the pathway is at places covered with dirt. The road which leads up between Sylk's Hotel and Rosemount (Mrs. Allamby's Hotel) was on Tuesday, May 18th, when I first visited it, in a disgusting state. On the right-hand side as you went up, the whole roadway for many yards was a dunghill, on which was deposited all the debris of a large establishment, broken bottles, scraps of food, dirty paper, broken utensils of sorts, horse and cow manure, and everywhere, even on the main roadway, human ordure, the air was laden with the disgusting odour. Further up is a small road which turns to the right into Rosemount; this road was thickly covered with human excrement; it was impossible to pick one's way without contamination, and the air was poisoned with the sickly smell. Last year (1879) I lived at Rosemount during my stay on the Hills, and I occasionally rode out by this path behind the house; it was then in exactly the same state of filth as I found it this year; it is used as a *place d'aisance* by the servants of the establishment and of the visitors. Nor do I wonder at this, for they have no place nearer than the latrines on the Pykara road, below Walpole Cottage, where they can resort. On May 26th when I visited this place again, I found it had all been cleaned, no doubt owing to a conversation I had on the 19th, the day after my first visit, with the Municipal Manager on the subject. But on the 28th, when I visited it again in company with the Vice-President, Mr. Schmidt, and the Inspector, it had already begun to put on its usual appearance. The roadside by Sylk's was thickly strewn with human excrement, and the by-road of Rosemount was again giving out its sickly odour. The Vice-President has promised to have a latrine erected here for the many servants of these two establishments—Sylk's and Allamby's. Take another place. In the heart of the town there is a pathway which leads up near the Police lines, past the old dispensary, it is thickly covered on each side with young "wattle," the place is a cloaca and stinks abominably. I could mention several other places, but the above may be deemed sufficient. My own opinion is there is no excuse for this state of things. Sylk's and Rosemount and Shoreham are three of the principal hotels resorted to by visitors frequenting these Hills, and it would seem certainly a part of the duty of the proprietors, in common fairness to their clients, to keep their premises in a sanitary state of cleanliness; indeed, it seems to me the Municipality have ample power to compel them (*vide* Sections 103 and 104 of Act No. III of 1871). The servants of the establishment, to which is to be added the servants of the visitors, seem to have no proper latrines to resort to, and are thus obliged to defile the grounds around; nor is this a novel state of things. I have before me as I write three reports on the sanitary condition of Ootacamund, dated respectively 1865, 1868, and 1877.

In 1865, Mr. Ellis writes: "In many places close to the high road advantage is taken, by passers by, of the shelter afforded by portions of private enclosures, and these became virtually public latrines." "Of the urgent want of latrines, both public and private, abundant evidence was afforded. In some places the native servants had created intolerable nuisances by resorting to the undergrowth of trees for the purpose of nature."

In 1868, Mr. Ranking, Sanitary Commissioner, was ordered by Government (G.O., No. 475, of April 17th, 1868), in consequence of a report by the then Senior Medical Officer, Dr. Donaldson, to proceed to Ootacamund and report on its sanitary state. He thus writes: "The truth of Dr. Donaldson's report is even now apparent, for not only is every clump of underwood, affording the least shelter, used as a *place d'aisance, &c.*" "The clearance which has been effected along the borders of the highways has by general testimony improved the condition of the atmosphere, but still the sense of smell is assailed by vile odours, *and it is scarcely too much to say that there is a general fæcal taint of the atmosphere more pronounced in some localities than in others.*" It is but fair to state I had examined the places I allude to in paragraph 2, and made my notes before I had seen this report.

In Dr. Gordon's very comprehensive and voluminous report of May 23rd, 1877, the remarks concerning the general insanitary state of Ootacamund are very frequent: "Houses, huts, and other buildings occur in places where all the requirements of health are absent; heaps of dirt in various stages of decomposition abound." "So far as the experience of the past justifies the expression of our opinion, it is fair to predict that a few more years will suffice to render existing conditions beyond the power of being remedied.

"Droppings, human and animal, lie thickly strewed about," &c.

I am not at all inclined to underrate the difficulties the Municipality or its Executive Officers have to prevent natives using the shelter of the brushwood as an easy and accessible place to obey the calls of nature, and I am ready to admit that, with the utmost vigilance, it would be almost impossible to prevent it entirely; but a surreptitious use here and there is very different from the state of things found to exist in the places described above, which is a disgrace to a civilised community.

Latrines.—I scarcely like to attempt to describe these places, for fear I should be deemed to be using the language of exaggeration; and yet any words I can think of fail to convey an adequate idea of their state as I first saw them in the early part of the month of May; sufficeth it to say that although I looked carefully I could not find *one* in a fit state for a human being, having any respect for cleanliness, to use. I do not wonder at natives preferring to make use of the roadsides and by-lanes. I will particularise one or two. There is a small latrine at the corner of the main bazaar road, at the west end of the market, so filthy and dirty that as you stand in the main roadway, some ten or more yards away, you smell it distinctly; approach it and you find urine and fæcal matter actually oozing out of the front door, and all around "droppings" of people who have resorted, as if to the latrine for use, but their courage has failed them to enter, and they have used the public thoroughfare instead. This latrine is built of corrugated iron, which evidently has not been painted for a very long time, most probably since erected, nor is it anywhere tarred. Moreover, it is erected against a human habitation. At the bottom of Butcher's Hill is another large latrine, evidently a double one, for the use of males and females. This is much cleaner outside, the iron is painted white, but inside it is quite as filthy. The place has not been tarred for a very long time, and the same outflow of human urine and something worse issues from the entrance. On the road up to Metoocherry is another which stinks abominably, and you can see from the roadside its very entrance and all around is covered with dirt; this place is not tarred. I summoned up courage to enter one, which seemed the cleanest, near the Police lines, and I was simply made ill for some hours after from the disgusting state of things I saw and smelt inside. At my request the Vice-President ordered a latrine to be made clean for me that I might inspect it, and I saw one, viz., the large one near the market-place, I presume under the most favorable aspects. There was a series of raised seats with buckets inside; the buckets were all or nearly all without handles, and although clean

for my inspection, smelt abominably; the flooring was in many places broken, and the ground underneath evidently saturated with urine and fæcal oozing. No dry earth, I was informed, was ever used.

Market.—On Thursday, May 13th, I inspected the market. I transcribe my notes: "It was filthy in the extreme. The yard surrounding the building was strewn with debris of all sorts, pieces of torn and soiled matting, cocoanut fibre, spilt grain, decaying vegetable matters, animal ordure, all this half trodden into the soft and badly drained earth. The building itself was filthy also; the walls have evidently not been whitewashed for a very long time, it may be for years; the walls stained in many places with betel-dyed saliva, and often with what appeared something worse. All around in the verandahs were natives variously grouped, some asleep, some just awakening and commencing preparations for the day. In one place I saw a poor woman in the ague stage of fever, shivering under a cumbly, whilst her husband was proffering what assistance lay in his power. In another a group of men and boys squatting over a fire. In many places around, close to and sometimes in the verandah, proofs that the calls of nature had been obeyed there during the night time. This is the central, and, I believe, the only market-place of Ootacamund, the sanitarium of Southern India!"

May 16th. "I visited the market-place again to-day, thinking perhaps its state at my last visit was exceptional. I found it just as dirty. The debris on the ground was there, just as I had seen it last Thursday, people still sleeping and lying about in the verandahs, and evidently going no further than the edge to obey the calls of nature. There were several places where urine was quite recent; one part of the market-place, not the yard but the building, was used as a dust heap, and on the dust heap was a quantity of semi-liquid human excrement; it seemed to me as if it had been brought from some house and thrown there as a convenient and usual place."

Tuesday, May 18th, "is the market day. I visited the market this morning at 7-30 A.M., and everything was exactly as I have seen it before, *plus* the collection of people with their fruit, flowers, and vegetables for sale. Close to the dust heap, mentioned in my notes of the previous visit, was a collection of vegetables for sale; the collection of privy emptyings was not four paces from the cabbages and cauliflower being bought for one of the hotels. The man at the gate, whom I saw taking money, tells me he farms the market from the Municipality for Rs. 3,600 a-year, but it is not his business to keep it clean."

May 26th. "I again inspected the market-place in my morning ride and I found it exactly in the same state as on the 13th, 16th, and 18th. The dust heap in the northern verandah perhaps larger and more offensive."

May 28th. "I visited the market to-day accompanied by Mr. Schmidt, the Vice-President, and the Inspector (McCarthy); the compound and yard of the market-place were clean, and the Inspector tried to persuade us it was always so kept. He could not tell when the building had been whitewashed, and said it has been customary ever since he had been in office for people to sleep there; they had no other places; he had often represented it. When shown the dust heap and its filthy top dressing, he was somewhat astonished, and Mr. Schmidt was indignant and ordered it to be at once cleared away. The Inspector said he did not think there was any harm in this collection; he had no other convenient place to keep it."

Remarks.—Latrines kept as I found them are no aids to sanitation; indeed, I am not sure it would not be better for the town if they were, if they cannot be kept in a better state than this, done away with entirely.

But is it impossible to keep them clean and fit for human use? I do not see the difficulty. It is a mere matter of labor and a little ingenuity. In former years the complaint was there was no proper establishment to look after all this, now I find the Conservancy Establishment consists of—

		RS.
1	Inspector	90
1	Assistant Inspector	40
3	Maistries, at 15 rupees each	45
1	Head Scavenger	9
24	1st-class Scavengers, at 8 rupees each	192
24	2nd-class do. at 7 " "	168
8	3rd-class do. at 6 " "	48
8	4th-class do. at 5 " "	40
12	Cartmen, at 8 rupees each	96
4	Do. at 7 " "	28
86	Total	756

and the number of latrines is, I believe, thirty-six. Surely eighty-six people, if their energies and time were properly directed, could keep these places clean.

In the first place the Director of this labor should be a person who understands his work. Dr. Gordon in his report, p. 63 p. (J), writes: "We are attended by the functionary misnamed the Sanitary Inspector. There is no official to whom the name is properly applicable; he who bears the title here is at best but an Inspector of Nuisances, nor does *he appear to have a clear idea of the extent of his duties and responsibility.* It is right to observe, however, that in his own way he is active and willing. He is a discharged soldier; he has only been employed in his present position since 27th April 1877; he confesses he has not yet been everywhere." I can endorse this portion of Dr. Gordon's report "*nor does he appear to have a clear idea of the extent of his duties and responsibility,*" but I cannot endorse the remark that he is "active." I cannot imagine a man who, as an old soldier, must be cognizant of the conservancy carried on in European Barracks, allowing, if "active," such a state of things, as I have described, existing in the market when I inspected it. The most ordinary inspection, if a man were active, intelligent, and knew anything of his duties, must have detected the filth and dirt there accumulated. We will omit the latrines. Then this official has an Assistant on 40 rupees a-month; Rs. 130 well laid out, on *bonâ fide* active and intelligent supervision, would, I should imagine, render such a state of things, as I have described, hereafter impossible. As Dr. Gordon writes (p. 63, p. J): "In Ootacamund a veritable Sanitary Inspector is much required, but in order that his duties may be efficiently performed *he should know what those duties consist of,* and have had special training."

I do not know exactly the difference between first, second, third, and fourth class scavengers, but if there are not enough of these laborers, would it not be better to have fewer of the first and second class and more of the third and fourth? But I am of opinion that the scavengers are sufficient, if an efficient head existed to superintend and intelligibly direct the work.

No dry earth is used in these latrines. Would it not be possible to accumulate sufficient dry earth in the non-rainy season to use in these places? Even if the people frequenting the latrines were ignorant of the proper use of dry earth, were the scavengers to place some in the morning in each bucket and again before removing them, it would facilitate their work and render it less offensive to them. In this manner it would come to be more effectually performed.

It strikes me the carts that take out the excreta to the poudrette farm might on the return journey bring back each time some dry-earth, and a depôt might easily be made there for that purpose. At present, I am told, they return empty. Mr. Ranking thus wrote as far back as 1868: "This kind of public privy must be at once abandoned, and proper latrines erected upon the dry-earth principle."

Tar should certainly be used in all the latrines. In the General Hospital at Madras the latrines are tarred once a week, and are quite free from any offensive smell. Here they might be tarred perhaps once a fortnight, or once a month, as it might be found necessary; experience is the only guide in these things. The Inspector was unable to tell me when any of them had been tarred last. My own impression was none had been tarred since the first time, most probably the time of their erection.

I think, also, it would detract from their offensiveness if the latrines were planted round with some quick-growing shrub (not the "wattle"), or some flowering creeper. At present, in addition to their odious and offensive smell, they are an eyesore to the scenery.

Many of them might with advantage be removed to some other spot; the ground on which they at present stand, and which is saturated with urine, &c., dug up and removed to the poudrette farm.

I think the latrines themselves might be constructed on a better principle, but this has already been touched upon in Dr. Gordon's report, p. 95, and I need not here recapitulate his or add my remarks. My object being more to show that, with the means at our present disposal, the latrines of Ootacamund might be kept fairly clean.

As regards my remarks on the market, I see by the previous reports already alluded to that the custom of sleeping there and turning it into a choultry is of very old standing. Mr. Ellis writes, 1865: "The market-house itself is occupied by masses of people who cook and house cattle in it, and *who palpably use it as a 'latrine.'*"

Mr. Ranking adds, 1868: "Since Mr. Ellis reported upon this market it has undergone extension by the addition of wings. It is still, however, used more as a choultry than as a market proper."

Hospital.—Inspected St. Bartholomew's Hospital in company with Dr. Price in charge. The hospital was particularly clean and in good order. Having been present at the opening of this institution and much interested in its erection (1867-68), I was particularly pleased to see it has gradually grown in size, fresh buildings and wards having been opened, testifying to its popularity and utility. The only thing which struck me was that there was a deficiency of dry earth in store for use in the latrines.

Police Lines.—Went on from the hospital to Police lines. The latrines in Police lines were not clean, indeed although not quite so dirty as those in the town, very far from what they should

be. They are constructed on the trench principle, and as no dry earth is used these trenches not only became disgustingly offensive to the people using them, but must be most difficult to clean. They are not tarred.

Police hospital very clean and latrine well tarred and perfectly clean. The compounds about here, especially over the old dispensary, in a frightful state of dirt, stinking of human ordure.

Jail.—The European and Native Jails scrupulously clean, and every attention paid to sanitation.

Water.—In Dr. Gordon's report (May 23rd, 1877, page 97, *et seq.*) an exhaustive account is given of the water-supply of Ootacamund with analysis; it will therefore be needless for me to enter largely on this question. I may state, however, that I have examined the water at various times, and find that the drinking water from the filters in the bazaars is to the ordinary tests of smell, taste, sight, and permanganate of potash fairly good. After rain the water is somewhat turbid, but considering it makes its way down from the reservoir in open channels, this is not to be wondered at. I have also frequently examined the water of the upper part of the lake, and it also, by the ordinary tests at my command, I find good. The stream which flows past the Agraharam into the lake is often, it is reported, found to be contaminated by the drainage and washing of the people of that part of the town. I scarcely see how this is to be avoided, unless the inhabitants are to be debarred the ordinary use of a running stream. I could detect, however, no evidence of fæcal matter from specimens of water obtained at the bridge here, either by the ordinary tests of boiling, smell, permanganate of potash or microscope. The water gives down a brown sediment which, under the microscope, was found to be decaying and decayed vegetable matter. It would be easy, however, by a very little engineering skill to flush this stream periodically, if a weir, with sluice gates, were erected at the small lake at Crewe Hall and behind Glendower Hall (Smith's Dispensary).

Lawrence Asylum.—I visited the Lawrence Asylum and went over the school-room, dining hall, dormitories, latrines, lavatories, kitchens, and infirmary of the boys' school. I found everything exceedingly clean and in good order, except, perhaps, the asphalte-floor of the lavatory, which was broken in many parts allowing the water to lodge and soak into the ground underneath. This flooring, the Principal informed me, is old, has been down some ten or twelve years, and is shortly to be repaired. The latrines were a model of cleanliness and sensible arrangement. The boys appeared healthy and in good spirits. There were only three boys in hospital with trifling complaints. This in a school of some 300 to 400 boys speak volumes of the sanitary state of the establishment. I saw the lads have their dinner, an ample meal of well-cooked mutton-curry and rice, which I tasted and found very good.

I visited also the girls' school; everything here, the dormitories, school-room, kitchen, latrines, &c., were admirably neat and clean. It would be an improvement perhaps to this establishment if a room were set aside, or built—for I am informed there is none in the present building available—for a sick room or infirmary. This I am told has often been represented. At my visit there was not a single case on the sick list, and I never saw a collection of young people looking more rosy and healthy even in England.

(Signed) M. C. FURNELL, M.D., F.R.C.S.,
Sanitary Commissioner for Madras.

No. 1578.

Communicated to the President of the Municipal Commission, Ootacamund, for his remarks.

(Signed) J. A. DAVIES,
Acting Under Secy. to Govt.

OOTACAMUND,
9th August 1880.

No. 94. *From N. A. ROUPELL, Esq., Acting President of the Municipal Commission, Ootacamund, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated 9th October* 1880, *No.* 161 [*Current No.* 2670].

In returning the Sanitary Commissioner's Inspection Report of the Ootacamund Municipality, dated 27th July 1880, forwarded to me for remarks, I have the honor to enclose copy of minutes of a special meeting of the Ootacamund Municipal Commissioners held on the 25th September last, and submit the following observations.

2. The Commissioners' proposals 1 and 2 call for no particular remark.

3. Adverting to proposal 3, I would observe that the Commissioners have decided to encourage and extend the system of private scavenging in both European and Native premises. The advantages of this system are manifest. The original heavy outlay involved in the erection of public necessaries as well as the cost of their upkeep are avoided, while the fees charged in consideration of the special services rendered will in a greater or less degree reimburse the Municipality for the actual cost of such services. There is, however, a large number of the poorer classes as well as weekly market frequenters whose wants are not provided for, and for these the said public latrines are proposed.

4. Each cart when complete will require the following working establishment attached to it, viz.:—

	RS.
One Driver	8
Two Sweepers, at 7 rupees each	14
Keep of one pair of bullocks	9
Total ..	31 monthly.

It is estimated that Rs. 450 can be disbursed this year for additional sanitary service on account of these carts and the new latrines, the same sweepers being available for both.

5. A list of "wattle grounds" will be prepared and kept in the office. These will be cleaned periodically, or whenever required.

6. Repairs to existing latrines have for some time past been going on. These will be continued until every latrine is in good order. The dry-earth system has been introduced and will be maintained for latrines and slaughter-houses, and both will be henceforth periodically tarred. New buckets have been supplied. This item will be more carefully looked to in future. The slaughter-houses will be shortly put in repair.

7. The suggestion that all latrines should be screened off has been adopted in some places by planting trees, which are at present but small. It is doubtful how far this experiment will succeed. The ravages of children and goats render the rearing of the plants difficult. The Commissioners hesitate to extend the screen system, many of them having personal experience of the propensity of natives in such cases to shun the latrines and to use the space *between* them and the surrounding screens for purposes of nature. Hardy creepers might be trained so as to hide the material of the latrines, but the existence of these structures cannot be concealed; the very screens will, to a certain extent, suggest their presence, and I think that if kept clean inside and tidy outside, they should give no just ground for offence.

8. Attention will be given to the inspection of private premises.

9. A market peon has been appointed specially to see to the proper conservancy of the market premises. The building has of late been used very much as a chattram, an arrangement not contemplated in the market contract. Steps have been taken to mitigate the annoyance thus occasioned.

10. It will be observed that of the sum appropriated, Rs. 3,080 are of the character of permanent outlay, entailing an annual working expenditure of Rs. 1,488. It is hoped that a portion of this will be recovered by private scavengering fees and sale of poudrette. There is a considerable available balance from which the funds required can be provided.

11. Inquiry is being made in view to improving and extending the system of poudrette manufacture and sale. There seems no good reason why this material as well as sweepings should not be turned to useful account, and be converted into a course of permanent income. A private offer has already been made for all such refuse.

12. Dr. Furnell's remarks upon the inadequacy of the conservancy supervision are receiving attention, and, should the present establishment be found on further trial to be unequal to the task, a change will be made. A division of the Municipality into

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465/4

three or four Inspectorates might work well as promoting emulation between the different Inspectors, each of whom would be solely responsible for his charge. The area to be visited is extensive, and the Inspectorate is at present short-handed.

13. I gladly accept Dr. Furnell's proposal that one of the Medical Officers at this station should exercise the powers of a Sanitary Officer.

—

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

MINUTES of a Special Meeting of the Ootacamund Municipal Commissioners held on the 25th September 1880.

PRESENT:

N. A. Roupell, Esq., Acting President, Ootacamund Municipal Commission.
W. E. Schmidt, Esq., Vice-President.
A. S. Cowdell, Esq.
Gool Mahomed Sait.
R. S. Benson, Esq., Honorary Secretary, Ootacamund Municipal Commission.

With reference to the report of the Sanitary Commissioner which has for some time been before the Commissioners, and to certain proposals by the President for improving the existing system of conservancy and for extending it, the wants of the town being at present very inadequately met, the meeting, after some discussion, resolved upon the following measures:—

1. To build four night-soil carts at a cost of Rs. 170 each, Rs. 680.
2. To purchase of four pairs of bullocks at Rs. 100 each pair, Rs. 400.
3. To spend a sum up to Rs. 2,000 upon new public latrines.
4. Cost of additional establishment for carts and latrines, say Rs. 600 for the current year.

(Signed) N. A. ROUPELL,
Acting President, Ootacamund Municipality.

No. 95. ORDER THEREON, 18th March 1881, No. 465.

Communicated to the Sanitary Commissioner. The Government note the measures adopted for the improved sanitation of Ootacamund, and trust that they will prove effective. The Sanitary Commissioner will report on the subject at the end of the current official year. The President will submit the names of the two chief Medical Officers in the station in order that they may be appointed Commissioners, in view to their advising on the various measures required for still further improving the sanitary condition of the town.

(True Extract.)

R. DAVIDSON,
Chief Secretary,

To the Sanitary Commissioner.
" Surgeon-General with the Governm Madras.
" President of the Municipal Commi tacamund.

Exd. J. Wright.

13

Govt. of (1881) Madras.

FINANCIAL.

To

THE SANITARY COMMISSIONER,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated March, 18th.

Issued

Recd. Encl.

G.O., 18th March 1881, No. 465.

MARCH.
Nos. 93—95.

Municipal — Sanitary. — Communicating letter from the Acting President, Ootacamund Municipality, submitting, with observations, copy of minutes of a special meeting of the Commissioners with reference to the Sanitary Commissioner's Inspection Report of the Municipality

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Office of Sanitary Commissioner
Ootacamund 27th July 1880

No. 782

465/22

93

From

The Sanitary Commissioner
for Madras

To

The Chief Secretary to Government
Public Department
Ootacamund

Sir,

I have the honor to forward herewith my sanitary inspection report of Ootacamund.

Something has been done to remedy, in the market for instance, the state of things I have described as existing when I inspected them; but as it will be seen from Mr. Ellis', Mr. Rankings and Dr. Gordon's previous reports, that the state I found things in is not exceptional, I have deemed it better to let my notes stand as they are. It must be very evident that if this indifference to sanitation, is allowed to continue from year to year, some epidemic disease, as we read is

DISPOSED OF
16 MAR 81
BY G. O. No.

the case in Simla just now, will arise and destroy the fame of the Sanitarium of Southern India. Indeed it would have been almost an impossibility Ootacamund should have hitherto escaped, but that the houses are so far apart.

From what I can gather, from conversation with the Vice President and others, it is deemed no one's particular duty in the Municipality to look to these matters; I would therefore venture to suggest, in accordance with the views of Government as expressed in G. O. 19th March 1880 No. 587, that one of the Medical officers of this station should exercise the power of a Sanitary officer.

I have the honor to be
Sir
your most obt. Servant
M. C. Furnell.
M.D. F.R.C.S.
Sanitary Commissioner
for Madras

Inspection notes of the Ootacamund Municipality

1165/5

Roads The Roads of Ootacamund are very numerous: the principal are well kept and in good state of repair.

Conservancy. The conservancy is very bad. I never remember Ootacamund so dirty: almost every where one rides or walks a sickly smell of human ordure is perceptible. I will mention one or two places in particular. The west side of the Hill on which Shoreham is situated, and which is covered with brush-wood of the "wattle" is simply a cloaca; not only as you walk down is there a strong smell of fæcal matter, but even the pathway is at places covered with dirt. The Road which leads up between Sylk's Hotel and Rosemount (~~the~~ Allanby's hotel) was on Tuesday May 18th when I first visited it in a disgusting state. On the right hand side as you went up, the whole road way for many yards was a dunghill on which was deposited all the debris of a large establishment, broken bottles, scraps of food, dirty paper, broken utensils of sorts, horse and cows manure and every where, even on the main road-way, human ordure; the air was laden with the disgusting odour. Further up is a small road which turns to the right into Rosemount, this road was thickly covered with human excrement, it was impossible to pick one's way without contamination, and the air was poisoned with the sickly smell. Last year (1879) I lived at Rosemount during my stay on the Hills, and I occasionally rode out by this path behind the house, it was then in exactly the same state of filth as I found it this year; it is used as a "place d'aisance" by the servants of the establishment, and of the visitors. Nor do I wonder at this for they have no place nearer than the Latrines on the Pykara road, below Walpole cottage, where they can resort. On May 26th when I visited this place again I found it had all been cleaned, no doubt owing to a conversation I had on the 19th, the day after my first visit, with the Municipal Manager on the subject. But on the 28th when I visited it

again

again in Company with the Vice President Mr Schmidt and the Inspector, it had already begun to put on its usual appearance. The road side by Sylks was thickly strewn with human excrement, and the by road of Rosemount was again giving out its sickly odour. The Vice President has promised to have a latrine erected here for the many servants of these two establishments, Sylks and Allamby's. Take another place, in the heart of the town, there is a pathway which leads up near the police lines, past the old Dispensary, it is thickly covered on each side with young wattle, the place is a cloaca and stinks abominably. I could mention several other places but the above may be deemed sufficient. My own opinion is there is no excuse for this state of things. Sylks and Rosemount and Shoreham are three of the principal hotels resorted to by visitors frequenting these Hills, and it would seem certainly a part of the duty of the proprietors, in common fairness to their clients, to keep their premises in a sanitary state of cleanliness; indeed it seems to me the Municipality have ample power to compel them vide section 103 & 104 of Act No. III of 1871. The servants of the establishment, to which is to be added the servants of the visitors, seem to have no proper latrines to resort to and are thus obliged to defile the grounds around. Nor is this a novel state of things; I have before me as I write three reports on the Sanitary condition of Ootacamund dated respectively 1865, 1868, 1877.

In 1865 Mr Ellis writes "In many "places close to the High Road advantage is taken, by "passers by, of the shelter afforded by portions of "private enclosures and these became virtually pub- "lic latrines". "Of the urgent want of latrines both "public and private abundant evidence was af- "forded. In some places the native servants had "created intolerable nuisances by resorting to the un- "dergrowth of trees for the purpose of nature".

In 1868 Mr Ranking, Sanitary Commissioner, was ordered by Government, (G.O. No. 475 of April 17th 1868) in consequence of a report by the then Senior Medical Officer, Dr Donaldson, to proceed to Ootacamund and report on its Sanitary state. He thus writes "The truth of Dr. Donaldson's report is even now apparent for not only is every clump of underwood affording the "least shelter, used as a place, d'aisance &c." "The "clearance which has been effected along the "borders of the highways has by general testimony "improved the condition of the atmosphere, but "still the sense of smell is assailed by vile odours "and it is scarcely too much to say that there is a "general faecal taint of the atmosphere more "pronounced in some localities than in others". It is but fair to state I had examined the places I allude to in Para 2, and made my notes before I had seen this report.

[illegible]

In Dr Gordon's very comprehensive and voluminous report of May 23d 1877, the remarks concerning the general insanitary state of Ooty are very frequent. "Houses, huts and "other buildings occur in places where all the "requirements of health are absent, heaps of dirt "in various stages of decomposition abound". "So "far as the experience of the past justifies the "expression of an opinion, it is fair to predict "that a few more years will suffice to render existing white, but inside it is quite as filthy. The place has not been tarred for a very long time, and the same outflow of human urine and something worse issues from the entrance. On the road up to Mstonchery is another which stinks abominably and you can see from the road side its very entrance and all around is covered with dirt, this place is not tarred. I summoned up courage to enter one, which seemed the cleanest, near the police lines, and I was simply made ill for some hours after, from the disgusting state of things I saw and smelt inside. At my request the Vice President ordered a Latrine to be made clean for me, that I might inspect it, and I saw one, viz the large one near the market place, I presume under the most favorable aspects. There was a series of raised seats with buckets inside, the buckets were all or nearly all without handles and although clean for my inspection smelt abominably, the flooring was in many places broken and the ground underneath evidently saturated

with

6 88

with urine and faecal oozing. No dry earth I was informed was ever used.

1885/9

Market. On Thursday May 13th I inspected the market; I transcribe my notes. "It was filthy in
"the extreme. The yard surrounding the building
"was strewn with debris of all sorts, pieces of torn
"and soiled matting, cocoanut fibre, spilt grain, decay-
"ing vegetable matters, animal ordure, all this half
"trodden into the soft and badly drained earth. The
"building itself was filthy also, the walls have
"evidently not been whitewashed for a very long
"time, it may be for years, the walls stained in
"many places with betel-dyed saliva and often
"with what appeared something worse. All around
"in the verandahs were natives variously grouped,
"some asleep, some just awakening and commencing
"preparations for the day. In one place I saw a
"poor woman in the ague stage of fever, shivering
"under a cumbly, whilst her husband was
"proffering what assistance lay in his power.
"In another a group of men and boys squatting
"over a fire. In many places around, close to and
"sometimes in the verandah, proofs that the

walls

"calls of nature had been obeyed there during
"the night time. This is the central, and I believe,
"the only market place of Ootacamund the Sana-
"tarium of Southern India!"

May 16th "I visited the market place
"again today, thinking perhaps its state at my
"last visit was exceptional. I found it just as dirty.
"The debris on the ground was there, just as I had
"seen it last Thursday. people still a sleeping
"and lying about in the verandahs and evidently
"going no further than the edge to obey the calls
"of nature. There were several places where urine
"was quite recent; one part of the market place, not
"the yard but the building, was used as a dust heap
"and on the dust heap was a quantity of semi-liquid
"human excrement, it seemed to me as if it had
"been brought from some house and thrown
there as a convenient and usual place"

Tuesday May 18th "Is the market day
"I visited the market this morning at 7-30 A.M.
"and every thing was exactly as I have seen it
"before, plus the collection of people with their
"fruit, flowers and vegetables for sale. Close to the
"dust heap mentioned in my [illegible]tes of the previous

visit

"visit, was a collection of vegetables for sale; the
"collection of privy emptyings was not four paces
"from the cabbages and Cauliflower being bought
"for one of the Hotels. The man at the gate, whom
"I saw taking money, tells me he farms the
"market from the Municipality for 3,600 rupees
"a year but it is not his business to keep it
"clean".

May 26th "I again inspected the market
"place in my morning ride and I found it exactly
"in the same state as on the 13th, 16th, and 18th. the
"dust heap in the Northern verandah perhaps
"larger and more offensive."

May 27th "I visited the market to-day
"accompanied by Mr. Schmidt the Vice President
"and the Inspector, (McCarthy) the compound
"and yard of the market place was clean, and
"the Inspector tried to persuade us it was always
"so kept. He could not tell when the buildings
"had been whitewashed, and said it has been
"customary ever since he had been in office
"for people to sleep there, they had no other
"places, he had often represented it. When shewn

the dust heap and its filthy top dressing, he was somewhat astonished, and Mr Schmidt was indignant and ordered it to be at once cleared away. The inspector said he did not think "there was any harm in this collection he "had no other convenient place to keep it."

Remarks. Latrines kept as I found them are no aids to sanitation, indeed I am not sure it would not be better for the town they were, if they cannot be kept in a better state than this, done away with entirely.

But is it impossible to keep them clean and fit for human use? I do not see the difficulty. It is a mere matter of labour and a little ingenuity. In former years the complaint was there was no proper establishment to look after all this, now I find the conservancy establishment consists of

		Rs
1	Inspector	90
1	Assistant Inspector	40
3	Mistries at 15 Rs.	45
1	Head Scavenger	9
24	1st class — do — at 8 Rs.	192
24	2d — " — do — at 7 Rs.	168
8	3d — " — do — at 6 Rs.	48
8	4th — " — do — at 5 Rs.	40
12	Cartmen — at 8 Rs.	96
4	— do — at 7 Rs	28
86		Rs. 756

and the number of latrines is I believe 36 surely 86 people,

people, if their energies and time were properly directed could keep these places clean.

In the first place, the director of this labour should be a person who understands his work. Dr Gordon in his report p 63 p(3) writes "we are attended "by the functionary misnamed the Sanitary Ins-"pector. There is no official to whom the name is "properly applicable; he who bears the title here is at "best but an inspector of nuisances, nor does he appear "to have a clear idea of the extent of his duties and "responsibility. It is right to observe however that in "his own way he is active and willing. He is a discharged "soldier. he has only been employed in his present "position since 27th April 1877, he confesses he has "not yet been every where." I can endorse this portion of Dr Gordon's report "nor does he appear to have a "clear idea of the extent of his duties and responsi-"bility;" but I cannot endorse the remark that he is "active". I cannot imagine a man, who, as an old soldier, must be cognisant of the conservancy carried in European Barracks allowing, if "active", such a state of things, as I have described, existing in the market, when I inspected it. The most ordinary inspection, if a man were active, intelligent and knew any thing of his duties must have detected the filth and dirt there accumulated. We will omit the latrines, then this official has an assistant on 40 rupees a month, Rs 130 well laid out, in bona fide active and intelligent supervision, would I should imagine render such a state of things, as I have described, hereafter impossible. As Dr Gordon writes (p 63 ¶ 5) "In Ootacamund a veritable sanitary Inspector is much required, but in order that his duties may be efficiently performed *he should know what those duties consist of* and have had special training."

I do not know exactly the difference between first, second, third and fourth class scavengers, but if there are not enough of these labourers, would it not be better to have fewer of the first and second class and more of the 3rd and 4th? but I am of opinion that the scavengers are sufficient, if an efficient head existed to perintend and intelligibly direct the work.

N.B. Pay

No dry earth is used in these Latrines. would it not be possible to accumulate sufficient dry earth in the non-raining season to use in these places? Even if the people frequenting the latrines were ignorant of the proper use of dry earth,

were

were the scavengers to place some in the morning in each bucket and again before removing them, it would facilitate their work, and render it less offensive to them. In this manner it would come to be more effectually performed.

It strikes me the carts that take out the excreta to the Poudrette farm, might on the return journey bring back each time some dry earth, and a depôt might easily be made there for that purpose. At present I am told they return empty. Mr Ranking thus wrote as far back as 1860. "This kind of public privy "must be at once abandoned, and proper Latrines "erected upon the dry earth principle."

Tar should certainly be used in all the Latrines. In the General Hospital at Madras the Latrines are tarred once a week, and are quite free from any offensive smell. Here they might be tarred perhaps once a fortnight, or once a month, as it might be found necessary; experience is the only guide in these things. The Inspector was unable to tell me when any of them had been tarred last, my own impression was none had been tarred.

since the first time, most probably the time of their erection.

I think also it would detract from their offensiveness if the Latrines were planted round with some quick growing shrubs (not the "wattle") or some flowering creeper. At present in addition to their odious and offensive smell, they are an eyesore to the scenery.

Many of them might with advantage be removed to some other spot, the ground on which they at present stand and which is saturated with urine &c dug up and removed to the Poudrette farm.

I think the latrines themselves might be constructed on a better principle, but this has already been touched upon in Dr Gordon's report p.95, and I need not here recapitulate his or add my remarks. My object being more to shew that with the means at our present disposal, the Latrines of Ootacamund might be kept fairly clean.

As regards my remarks on the market, I see by the previous reports already alluded to that the custom of sleeping there and turning it into a choultry is of very old

standing

standing, Mr Ellis writes 1865 "the market house "itself is occupied by masses of people who cook "and house cattle in it, and who palpably use it "as a "Latrine"".

Mr Ranking adds 1868 "Since Mr "Ellis reported upon this market it has undergone "extension by the addition of wings. It is still "however used more as a choultry than as a "market proper".

Hospital Inspected St. Bartholomew's Hospital in company with Dr Price in charge. The Hospital was particularly clean and in good order. Having been present at the opening of this institution and much interested in its erection (1867-8) I was particularly pleased to see it has gradually grown in size. Fresh buildings and wards having been opened, testifying to its popularity and utility. The only thing struck me was that there was a deficiency of dry earth in store for use in the Latrines.

Police Lines. Went on from the Hospital to Police Lines, the Latrines in police line were not clean, indeed although not quite so dirty as those in the town, very far from what they should be. They are constructed on the trench principle, and as no dry earth is used, these trenches not only become disgustingly offensive to the people using them, but must be most difficult to clean. They are not tarred.

Police Hospital very clean and latrine well tarred and perfectly clean. The compounds about here especially over the old Dispensary in a frightful state of dirt, stinking of human ordure.

Jail The European and Native Jails scrupulously clean and every attention paid to sanitation.

Water In Dr Gordon's report (May 23d 1877 p. 97 et seq) an exhaustive account is given of the water supply of Ootacamund, with analysis, it will therefore be needless for me to enter largely on this question. I may state however that I have examined the water at various times, and find that the drinking water from the filters in the Bazaars is to the ordinary tests of smell, taste, sight,

and

and permanganate of potash fairly good. After rain the water is somewhat turbid, but considering it makes its way down from the reservoir in open channels this is not to be wondered at. I have also frequently examined the water of the upper part of the Lake, and it also by the ordinary tests at my command I find it good. The stream which flows past the Agraharam into the Lake is often, it is reported, found to be contaminated by the drainage and washing of the people of that part of the town. I scarcely see how that this is to be avoided, unless the inhabitants are to be debarred the ordinary use of a running stream. I could detect however no evidence of fæcal matter from specimens of water obtained at the bridge here, either by the ordinary tests of boiling, smell, permanganate of potash or microscope. The water gives down a brown sediment which under the microscope was found to be decaying and decayed vegetable matter. It would be easy however by a very little engineering skill to flush this stream periodically, if a weir, with sluice gates, were erected at the small lake at Crewe Hall and behind Glendower Hall (Smith's dispensary).

Lawrence Asylum. I visited the Lawrence Asylum and went over the Schoolroom, Dining Hall, Dormitories, Latrines, Lavatories, Kitchens and infirmary of the Boy's school. I found every thing exceedingly clean and in good order. Except perhaps the asphalt floor of the Lavatory, which was broken in many parts allowing the water to lodge and soak into the ground underneath. This flooring the Principal informed me is old, has been down some 10 or 12 years, and is shortly to be repaired. The Latrines were a model of cleanliness and sensible arrangement. The Boys appeared healthy and in good spirits. There were only three boys in Hospital with trifling complaints. This in a school of some 300 to 400 boys speaks volumes of the

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sanitary state of the Establishment. I saw the lads have their dinner, an ample meal of well cooked mutton curry and rice, which I tasted and found very good.

I visited also the girls school every thing here the Dormitories, school room, Kitchen, Latrines &c were admirably neat and clean - It would be an improvement perhaps to this establishment if a room were set aside, or built, for I am informed there is none in the present building available, for a sick room or Infirmary. This I am told has often been represented. At my visit there was not a single case on the sick list, and I never saw a collection of young people, looking more rosy and healthy even in England.

M. C. Furnell M.D. F.R.C.S.
Sanitary Commissioner

1165/16

Inspection Report on the
Ootacamund Municipality
R. D.
30 JUL 80

L. & Municipal 2016/30.7.80

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14 P

Ootacamund
Municipal Commissioners
Office 9th October 1880.

No. 161

2165/12

From,

A. A. Roupell Esq
Ag: President
Ootacamund Municipality

To,

R. Davidson Esq. C.S.I.
Chief Secretary
to Government,
Ootacamund.

Sir,

In returning the Sanitary Commissioner's Inspection Report of the Ootacamund Municipality dated 27th July 1880 forwarded to me for remarks, I have the honor to enclose copy of minutes of a special meeting of the Ootacamund Municipal Commissioners held on the 25th September last and submit the following observations.

2. The Commissioners proposals 1 and 2 call for no particular remark.

3. Adverting to proposal 3 I would observe that the Commissioners have decided to encourage and extend the system of private Scavenging in both European and Native premises. The advantages of this system are

DISPOSED OF
18 81
BY G. O. No.

are manifest. The original heavy outlay involved in the erection of Public necessaries as well as the Cost of their upkeep are avoided while the fees charged in consideration of the special services rendered will in a greater or less degree reimburse the Municipality for the Actual Cost of such services. There is however a large number of the poorer classes as well as weekly market frequenters whose wants are not provided for, and for these the paid public latrines are proposed,

4 Each cart when complete will require the following working Establishment attached to it viz:—

1 Driver	8 Rs
2. Sweepers at 7 Rs each	14 "
Keep of 1 pair of bullocks	9 "
	31 monthly

It is estimated that Rs 50 can be disbursed this year for additional Sanitary Service on account of these Carts and the new latrines, the same Sweepers being available for both,

5. A list of "waste grounds" will be prepared and kept in the

office

office. These will be cleaned periodically or whenever required,

6 Repairs to existing latrines have for some time past been going on. These will be continued until every latrine is in good order. The dry earth system has been introduced and will be maintained for latrines and Slaughter Houses and both will be henceforth periodically tarred, new buckets have been supplied. This item will be more carefully looked to in future. The Slaughter Houses will be shortly put in repair.

7. The suggestion that all latrines should be screened off has been adopted in some places by planting trees which are at present but small. It is doubtful how far this experiment will succeed. The ravages of Children and goats render the rearing of the plants difficult. The Commissioners hesitate to extend the screen system many of them having personal experience of the propensity of natives in such cases to shun the

latrines

the different Inspectors, each of whom would be solely responsible for his charge. The area to be visited is extensive and the Inspectorate is at present short handed.

13. I gladly accept Dr. Furnell's proposal that one of the medical officers at this station should exercise the powers of a Sanitary officer—

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most obdt Servt

Ag: President,
Ootacamund Municipality

C.C.

Minutes of a special meeting of the Ootacamund Municipal Commissioners held on the 25th September 1880,

Present

A.A. Roupell Esq President O.M.C
W.E. Schmidt Esq Vice President
A.S. Cowdell Esq
Goolmahomed Sait
R.S. Benson Esq Hony: Secy.—

With reference to the Report of the Sanitary Commissioner which has for sometime been before the Commissioners and to certain proposals by the President for improving the existing system of conservancy and for extending it, the wants of the Town being at present very inadequately met, the meeting, after some discussion, resolved upon the following measures:

1. To build 4 night soil carts at a cost of Rs 170 each = Rs
2. To purchase of 4 pairs of bullocks at Rs 100 each pair = Rs 400
3. To spend a sum up to Rs 2000 upon new Public Latrines.

latrines and to use the space between them and the surrounding screens for purposes of Nature. Hardy creepers might be trained so as to hide the material of the Latrines, but the existence of these structures cannot be concealed, the very screens will, to a certain extent, suggest their presence and I think that if kept clean inside and tidy outside, they should give no just ground for offence.

8 Attention will be given to the inspection of private premises.

9 A market peon has been appointed specially to see to the proper Conservancy of the market premises. The building has of late been used very much as a Chuttram, an arrangement not contemplated in the market Contract. Steps have been taken to mitigate the annoyance thus occasioned.

10. It will be observed that of the sum appropriated, Rs 30,80 are of the character of permanent outlay, entailing an

Annual

annual working Expenditure of Rs 1,488. It is hoped that a portion of this will be recovered by private Scavengering fees and sale of poudrette. There is a considerable available balance from which the funds required can be provided.

11. Enquiry is being made in view to improving and extending the System of poudrette Manufacture and sale. There seems no good reason why this material as well as Sweepings should not be turned to useful account and be converted into a source of permanent income. A private offer has already been made for all such refuse.

12 Dr. Furnell's remarks upon the inadequacy of the Conservancy Supervision are receiving attention and should the present Establishment be found on further trial to be unequal to the task, a change will be made. A division of the Municipality into 3 or 4 Inspectorates might work well as promoting emulation between

the

4. Cost of additional esta-blishment for carts and Latrines say Rs 600 for the current year,-

Of. President,
Ootacamund Municipality,

Munl. Sanitary

Financial Department

17 P

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President will submit the

17 P

Financial Department

1165

Munl. Sanitary

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~~24~~
23

Revl. Dept. / 1880 / Department

13 OCT 80 Ootacamund
Municipality
~~Munl.~~ - Sanitary
No. 161 of 1880.

From
The Aj: President
Ootacamund
Municipality

10465 / 21

To
R. Davidson Esq.
Chief Secretary
to Government
Ootacamund.

Dated 9th } October 1880
Recpd 11th "

No. 16

Enc: 2.

No. 267

(A he 2016 returned)

Subject

Returning the Sanitary Commissioner's Inspection Report and submitting certain observations on minutes of a special meeting of the Municipal Commissioners of Ootacamund held on 25th September last.

President will submit
the

Munl. Sanitary

Financial Department.

17 P

1165/85

24

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

READ the following letter from the President, Municipal Commission, Ootacamund, dated 9th October /80, No. 161.

Order. 18th March /81, No. 465.

Communicated to the Sanitary Commissioner. The Govt. note the measures adopted for the improved sanitation of Ootacamund and trust that they will prove effective. The Sanitary Commissioner will report on the subject at the end of the current official year. The President will submit the

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Finl. R/1880 Public

3 JUL 80

(Munct. - Sanitary)

From
The Sanitary Commissioner
for Madras

To 465 /81

To
The Chief Secretary
to Government.
Public Department
Ootacamund

Dated 27
Despd 28 } July 1880.
Recd 30

No. 782.
Ev.: 1

No. 20/6

Forwarding his inspection report on the Ootacamund Municipality

13 P

No. 1578.

TO BE RETURNED WITH REPLY.

Communicated to the President M. C. Ootacamund, for his remarks.

J. Davis
Ag. Under Secy.

Ootacamund 9th Augt./80 30/8/80

G.O. 28/9/80

the names of the two chief Medical officers in the station in order that they may be appointed Commissioners in view to their advising on the various measures required for still further improving the sanitary condition of the town.

To
The Sanitary Commr. &
Surgeon Genl. with the
Govt. of Madras
Said
President M.C., both comp.
2 to E & O.

Desp.
31/3

Ootacamund Sanitation

Govt. of 188 Madras.

To

Dated 188 . No.
Recd.

Nos.

Despatch.
C
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465
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Recd 11/3

2. Carnamjool

Govt. of {1881} Madras.

Fuel

DISPOSED OF

18 MAR 81

BY. G. O. No. 465

(26)

465

~~G.O. 188 , No.~~

Nos. 93-95.

Munl. – Sanitary. Comg: letter from ~~Ag~~ the Ag. Presdt. Ootacamund Muny: sub-mitting, with observations, copy of minutes of a Spl. meeting of the Commissioners ~~[illegible]~~ with reference to the Sany. Commr's inspection report of the ~~Muny~~. Municipality.