

Financial (1898) Department.

ORDINARY MS.

G.O., No. 1092

Dated 22-11-88

INDEXED.

3/4

[Despatch Abstract.]

Recording proceedings
of the Plague Council passing
orders on the recommendations
of the sanitary Council regarding
the necessary plague precautionary
measures.

T. 11/11/88

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Financial

Proceedings of the Plague Commissioner,

MADRAS — 1898.

1105P: 17-9-98 SC
829P: 17-8-98

Financial Dept

Recd. 15th Nov: } Enclosures
Regd. 15th Nov: } 1898. Spare copies

Letter, No. 88, 7th October 1898.

OCTOBER.

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Order W. 1092222-1898

19/11/98

*2 spare copies for
Major files.*

*Noted
17-11-98*

Plague.

Passing orders on the Sanitary Commissioner's recommendations regarding the formation of observation circles with a radius of five miles round an infected area, a reserve of Sanitary Inspectors, &c.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLAGUE COMMISSIONER.

READ—the following paper :—

From Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. KING, M.B., C.M., D.P.H., Sanitary Commissioner for Madras, to the Plague Commissioner, Ootacamund, dated Camp Mancherla, 20th September 1898, No. 1-P.—T.

With reference to my inspection of the locality affected with indigenous plague at the Guntakal Railway station, Timmencherla and Chippigiri, I have the honour to suggest that the following requirements are dictated by the experience gained :—

(1) The formation of "observation circles" round affected areas where they have not been already formed, should be carried out with the *utmost rapidity*, with the object of not only inspecting the villages in the vicinity, but especially of ascertaining the whereabouts of persons from the affected villages, as a certain number will, on the first appearance of the disease, or of efforts by Government officers to combat it, flee in alarm to villages in the neighbourhood, where they find readily accommodation in their relations' houses. This promptitude cannot be secured, unless the *personnel* wherewith to form the staff be obtainable by the Collectors concerned within a few hours' notice. To transfer certificated Sanitary Inspectors from "observation circles" already in existence, implies that they have hitherto fulfilled no sphere of utility. It should be possible to secure men not already employed on special duty. The alternative to removing men from existing "observation circles" is for Collectors to telegraph to my office for Sanitary Inspectors. I have already a list of Sanitary Inspectors and their addresses, but as I cannot promise them employment on a definite date, it stands to reason that a demand for their services may find them already engaged. The remedy seems to me that I should be permitted to entertain upon half pay ten certificated Sanitary Inspectors, who should be under my orders at Madras for any temporary duty upon which I may detail them, and be available for instant despatch to any part of the Presidency on my receiving demands from officers for plague duty. Full pay would be given to the sanitary staff from date of departure from Madras.

(2) A possibly more acute difficulty is the provision of scavengers, who are willing to undertake plague duty. I think here it would be advisable to allow me to enter into a contract on behalf of Government with a conservancy agent that, on pain of forfeiture of a deposit, he will produce at the locality required (on payment of their fares by me) within 24 hours *plus* allowance for time consumed in journeying there, six toties. A retaining fee of Rs. 1-8-0 per head per month might be allowed the contractor.

(3) It should be ruled that round an infected area observation circles shall be five and not ten miles diameter. These might be known as "preventive circles."

(4) An infected area should be defined as a locality where one case of indigenous plague has occurred within three weeks, and until such period as the Collector may declare it to be free of infection. This will much facilitate measures for control of the population from infected areas attempting to invade territory not infected; also with regard to precautions such as laid down in additional regulation 24. It is not desirable that each Collector should determine when an area should be termed infected; an uniform method should be enforced. The moment of acute danger undoubtedly arises when the first indigenous case is reported.

(5) Within preventive circles heads of villages should be required to report, under pain of punishment, all arrivals from infected areas without passports. Their attention to this point and to the presence of fever as at present required, should be assisted by the appointment by the Tahsildar of a Sanitary Panchayat formed of three respectable persons to every 1,000 inhabitants, as far as in the discretion of the Tahsildar this is feasible. The President of the Sanitary Panchayat should be the village head. It should assemble daily before sundown, and make entry as to arrivals of persons from infected areas and other matters bearing on plague prevention in a diary and should send special reports of any occurrence within its jurisdiction to the circle sanitary inspector for transmission to the plague supervisor. Specially useful members of panchayats should be rewarded by bangles, or mention in the District Gazettes.

(6) Officers not in receipt of a tentage allowance and carrying Government tents are required under existing rules to pay half the cost of transport. It cannot, for a moment, be suggested that daily allowance covers the cost of a camp upkeep that may be required on plague duty to move under 20 miles per day. I think it but fair that officers on plague duty carrying Government tents should be allowed to recover the total cost of transport.

(7) It is a useless proceeding to stop booking at railway stations near infected areas. The only safe method is to do away with the provision which delegates to police and stationmasters at small stations the duty of giving passports. Instead of these men special assistant sanitary inspectors on Rs. 25 per month should be employed. To stop booking simply diverts traffic and spreads out the infected population. I hold the view strongly that the regulation alluded to—even where infected areas are not concerned—is one of the weakest points in the existing regulations.

(8) There exists confusion as to the interpretation of the Government Order requiring me to be informed of the appearance of plague in a district, and the further order directing me to prepare a weekly return from statistics supplied by Collectors. The result has been that up to the 14th September, I was unaware that indigenous plague prevailed in and around Guntakal. On my arrival, I found it had already secured a firm hold on the area. Unless this office is to lose all touch of the sanitary condition of the Presidency, Collectors should be reminded that a daily written report of cases of indigenous plague in localities already declared to have been attacked should be supplied, and that all cases of imported and first of indigenous plague in all localities should be notified *by wire*. Medical officers performing plague duty in districts should be reminded that in the execution of their sanitary functions they should keep the Sanitary Commissioner fully informed of their whereabouts, and of their efforts to stay the progress of the disease.

LETTER—No. 18, dated 7th October 1898.

To

THE SANITARY COMMISSIONER.

SIR,

In reply to your letter, No. 1-P.—T., dated 20th September 1898, I have the honour to state that your proposal that observation circles round an infected area should be reduced from 10 miles diameter to 5 miles is sanctioned. I, however, see no reason to lay down any precise rule about what shall be considered infected areas. The matter will be left to the judgment of each Collector.

2. Your recommendation to keep a reserve of ten Sanitary Inspectors on half pay is sanctioned. I also sanction, as an experiment, your proposal to engage scavengers through a contractor. It should be reported upon after two months' trial. Collectors finding difficulty in obtaining scavengers will be requested to apply to you.

3. I do not think it is possible to carry out your idea about sanitary panchayats. Tahsildars have now so much to do that it is impossible to call upon them to appoint those panchayats. Village officers must continue to be held responsible as at present.

4. The question of tentage requires the orders of the Government of India and may lie over for the present.

5. The proposal to appoint special officers at railway stations has been negatived by Government in G.O., No. 1105, dated 17th September 1898.

6. The Collectors have been already instructed to report cases of plague to you (G.O., No. 829 P., dated 17th August 1898), and if they neglect to do so, they should be reminded.

7. The Surgeon-General will be requested to pass orders on the suggestion made in paragraph 8 of your letter.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

M. HAMMICK,
Plague Commissioner.

Copy to the Surgeon-General with the request that instructions may be issued to medical officers as suggested in paragraph 8 of the Sanitary Commissioner's letter.

M. HAMMICK,
Plague Commissioner.

Copy to all Collectors for information and guidance.

M. HAMMICK,
Plague Commissioner.

Exd W. D'Moss.

When given for copying 22/11
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189

READ AGAIN G.O., No.
189

DATED

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO G. No.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT

LETTER OF GOVERNMENT

STATEMENT WITH DITTO

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for Plague Commissioner



PA

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Noted
17/11/98