S.R.O. 1—3,500—16-9-40.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 588 Press ~~His.~~

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Dated 3.5.1861 ~~19~~ .

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 10. Read the following letter from GEO. PEARSE, Esq., M.D., Principal Inspector General Medical Department, Fort Saint George, to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Public Department, Fort Saint George, dated 18th April 1861, No. 64.

With reference to the Order of Government, Public Department, No. 273, of the 1st ultimo, I have the honor to transmit for the information of Government, the required report from the Surgeon of the Lunatic Asylum, explaining the duties and manner in which the servants attached to that Institution are employed.

From Surgeon Major J. E. MAYER, Lunatic Asylum, to J. McKENNA, Esq., M.D., Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals, Presidency, dated 27th March 1861, No. 40.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Orders of Government in the Judicial Department, dated 1st March 1861, No. 273, and in reply to the inquiry conveyed in paragraph, of these Orders, beg in the first instance to refer to a letter I addressed to the Chief Secretary to Government, No. 22, dated 13th February 1860, (copy of which is herewith forwarded) in answer to similar inquiries made by Sir Charles Trevelyan. I have carefully re-perused this letter, and do not see that I can afford any further information on the matters therein considered, I have therefore left it intact, and without addition.

In reply to paragraph 2, I beg to submit a Tabular Statement of the average number of patients daily treated in the Asylum, divided into classes of Europeans, East Indians, and Natives; also, a list of the number of servants employed with their respective salaries. Finally, with reference to the duties that these servants perform, I beg to forward the following statement and remarks:—

Average daily number of Lunatics for 1858, 1859 *and* 1860.

Europeans.....	1858	Average for the year.....		3¼
East Indians.....	„	Ditto	.....	23¼
Natives.....	„	Ditto	.....	24¼
		Average Total...		50¾
Europeans.....	1859	Average for the year.....		4
East Indians.....	„	Ditto	.....	20¼
Natives.....	„	Ditto	.....	25¼
		Average Total...		49¾
Europeans.....	1860	Average for the year.....		4
East Indians.....	„	Ditto	.....	16¼
Natives.....	„	Ditto	.....	22¼
		Average Total...		43

List of Commissariat Servants, &c.

1 European keeper...					Rupees	35	0	per month.
1 Native head keeper.					„	8	12	„
3 Do. ordinary keepers,	Rupees	7	0	0 each	„	21	0	„
5 Ward Coolies.....	at „	6	0	0 „	„	30	0	„
3 Lascars.	at „	5	12	0 „	„	17	4	„
3 Civil Lascars..... ...	at „	6	5	4 „	„	19	0	„
2 Ayahs for female patients,	at „	4	0	0 „	„	8	0	„
					Total Rupees...	139	0	„

Detailed statement of the duties performed by the servants of the Lunatic Asylum.

The duties of the servants referred to are, to be present during the entire day from the opening to the closing of the cells, and throughout this period (averaging 14 hours) they must closely watch the acts and movements of every patient in the Asylum, whether in their cells, in the closed area, or in the compound, where they are taken morning and evening for exercise, and change of air; they must at all these times and places be ready to prevent the patients from injuring themselves or others; they must also prevent the public property from being damaged or destroyed, to the frequent commission of all which acts maniacal patients are unhappily prone; they must attend unceasingly to the cleanliness of the floors and walls of all the cells in the building; the same attention must be paid to the state of the furniture and bedding, as well as to the cleanliness of the persons of the patients, many of whom are so disposed as to take pleasure in smearing themselves, the bedding, and clothing, together with the walls and floors of their cells with filth. At each meal, the servants (except those in attendance on the violent patients) are required to receive and take in to every patient, his or her food, and help to feed such as will not or cannot perform this duty for themselves. These and other points connected with the comfort of the insane vary so much (from their caprice violence and waywardness) that it is exceedingly difficult to detail all the duties of the servants of this establishment; but it may be shortly stated that they are required to perform the most disgusting work, which in other hospitals they would be exempted from; they are moreover often sufferers in person and property from the violence of those on whom they are attending; the knowledge of their liability to be bitten, maimed, or otherwise injured renders it generally difficult to replace them by others when they desert or leave the place, and the smallness of their salaries augments this difficulty considerably. Before the patients are shut up for the night, the servants are required carefully to examine their persons, their cells and furniture, and to remove any instrument or other thing by which an individual could injure himself.

At the opening of the cells in the morning they are to collect the patients, to wash and clean, clothe them, preparatory to their being taken out in the open grounds for exercise; the same rule is attended to in the evening. As patients are frequently troublesome and noisy during the night, those servants whose duty it is to sleep within the walls of the building are, under orders, required to open the cell or cells, ascertain the cause of any unusual noise, and endeavour, if possible, to pacify the patient or patients, and to use restraint if necessary. Finally, it is the duty of the servants so to watch and guard the patients that while out at exercise, as well as at all other times, they shall not succeed in making their escape, which many of them are constantly attempting. The servants necessarily perform likewise a variety of minor duties which it is not possible to specify or enumerate, such as taking out official correspondence, &c., &c.

REMARKS.

The nature of the duties devolving on the entire establishment attached to a Lunatic Asylum, are in reality so peculiar, so various, and so essentially different from those devolving on the establishment attached to an ordinary Hospital, that it becomes necessary to offer a few brief explanations, in order that the judgment may not be led into error, by comparing things which are essentially unlike.

1st. In an ordinary Hospital patients, except in the case of an occasional man suffering from *delirium tremens*, do not attempt to escape or to injure others or themselves; therefore, one or two sentries or peons at the gates are sufficient; how great is the difference in the case of insane patients who would all escape if they could, and how many more watchers and guards must be required to prevent their doing so? These generalities will, it is believed, be admitted, without comment, as applicable to all Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums, but the particular instance to which they apply most forcibly is, assuredly, that in which the building used for an Asylum, is altogether unsuited for the purpose, that in which the actual walls of the entire structure are so low, that one man standing on the shoulders of another can spring on to the roof, and if unobserved for a moment, can leave, not the building merely but the compound, to which there is no surrounding wall; that in which the ceiling, walls and floors, are of such kind, that with hands and nails only, large holes can be dug, bricks removed, and windows forced out; that in which the very bars and shutters are so old and rusted, that any

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3rd May 1861.

exertion of strength by a powerful man is in most cases sufficient to break heads or force them out. This is no exaggerated case, it is simply an accurate description of the state and nature of the Lunatic Asylum of Madras, the condition of which has been repeatedly pointed out, and in reference to which it may well be asked—How can any number of peons or sentries or servants be sufficient under such conditions, to prevent dangerous characters from escaping and inflicting injuries on themselves or the public? and indeed nothing could prevent their doing so, were the vigilance of the entire establishment less constantly exercised. A difference no less important than the one just referred to between ordinary Hospitals and a Lunatic Asylum, exists in the unfortunately general practice among insane patients of fouling the walls and floors of their cells, by smearing them with excrement, avoiding the use of night chairs, and relieving either the bowels or the bladder either in their clothes, their beds, or on the floors of their cells. It is well known that such cases do occur in other Hospitals, but they are rare and exceptional, and therefore not comparable with occurrences of daily and constant repetition, and here it is necessary to trace the effects on an establishment of the practices referred to. It is not merely, as might at first appear, the constant washing of clothes, beds and persons; it is not the cleaning, white-washing of walls and floors, nor their repeated chlorinozation; it is the constant watchfulness to get rid of and remove; it is the care, not only to clean and purify, but to keep the cells open and unoccupied, so that the oxygen and ozone of the atmosphere may have time to do their work, all which taken together will most certainly occupy numerous heads and hands. And let it not be thought that these matters are of importance only to the health, comfort and well being of the inmates of the Asylum; they are of the highest importance to the health and well being of those who are not inmates, viz., to the public at large, who would most certainly suffer, if any severe form of disease or epidemic fixed itself within the bounds of the Asylum. For all these reasons then the Government as well as the public have a strong interest in keeping the establishment up to a strength which allows of the most complete and perfect attention to sanitary measures. Hitherto, by unceasing care and attention to these matters, the evils that have elsewhere proved so fatal have been averted, but if the number of servants, reduced already to the lowest standard, be further reduced, it will not be possible to keep the patients and the building in the state desired, and the unavoidable result of this will be that those very visitations from which immunity has hitherto been purchased will come upon us.

The considerations I have noticed do not I think need any advocacy; they appeal directly to the sound sense and discrimination of every one; I will therefore not weaken the force of that appeal by any further remark. On another ground however I feel that as the Surgeon in charge I am bound to urge the necessity of leaving the number of servants untouched; should they be reduced, the painful alternative of again keeping men in chains and strait jackets must for individual and for the public safety be largely resorted to, a practice which save in a very few occasional cases, has been discontinued for years in the Madras Lunatic Asylum.

Esquirol, Pritchard, Conolly and a host of others, have indeed written in vain, if it be now necessary, to say any thing in deprecation of so barbarous a pratice, repugnant alike to humanity, the age in which we live, and to true Medical science. Against the various weighty and important considerations adduced, all that can be brought forward is the insignificant gain to be obtained by reducing the establishment; but whatever may be the general force of argument of this kind they will, in the present case, be found to apply less cogently than in most others, since the Surgeon in charge receives no remuneration for his services. The Commissariat accounts will shew that the greatest economy in the treatment and dieting of patients has been uniformly observed; thus it is obvious that no institution can be managed more economically for Government than the Lunatic Asylum of Madras.

(Signed) J. MAYER,
Surgeon Major.

No. 11. ORDER THEREON, 3rd May 1861, No. 588.

Resolved that the consideration of the above letter be deferred, pending any general measures which it may be decided to adopt, in reference to the Military and Police Force at present entertained at the Town of Madras.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. T. O'Connor.

Letter 13 Feby 1860
& proceedings 19
April 1860

5. No doubt as Dr. Mayer has said before the establishment, if it had the same means could provide its own guard - but that would be as broad as it is long - the additional expence would be the same or nearly so -

1. Serjeant — 9
9. Seers. @ 7 Rs. — 63

72 Rs.

a month - and this from them relieved would not go very far to meet the wants of the Commissioner of Police, for he requires not 10 men, but at least 27. —

6. Whatever he requires - less or more - must form an additional charge, and be the subject of an application to the Govt. of India - The question is whether any such application should

Inwards Head
In the Medical
Dept
W. H.
&c

should be made now
which the extent
to which our further
Military reductions
are to be carried out
is yet undecided.

JP

Public Dept.

Judicial 1861. Department.

No. 588.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Dated 3d May 1861.

Referring the Consideration of the letter from the Principal & Inspector General Medical Department Explaining the duties and manner in which the servants attached to the Lunatic asylum are employed pending any general measures which it may be decided to adopt in reference to the Military & Police forces at present entertained at the Town of Madras

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