

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	145	Press
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Dated	3-2-1864.	19

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
3rd February 1864.*

Read the following papers :—

No. 12. From R. COLE, Esq., Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, Fort Saint George; to A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Judicial Department, Fort Saint George, dated 14th January 1864, No. 13.

In forwarding for the information of Government the correspondence* marginally entered,

* No. 57 of 11th January 1864 and enclosures.

I have the honor to state that I entirely concur with the Deputy Inspector General and the Medical Officer in charge of the Jail that the attempted dictation on the part of the prisoners should not be heeded until, at any rate, it is proved by trial that the grain issued proves injurious to them—which the Medical Officer will carefully watch.

2. It appears to me that this combined action of the convicts amounts to *conspiracy* and requires Magisterial interference.

3. It should be noted that *cleaned cholam without the husk* has been, under my recommendation, for some time issued to the convicts.

4. It is to be observed that these men come from a District where *cholam* and other dry grains are the ordinary food of the people; so that it does not happen that they have been subjected to a novel and unaccustomed diet which might probably disagree with their digestive organs.

From J. MAYER, Esq., Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals, Presidency Division; to the Secretary to the Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 11th January 1864, No. 57.

I have the honor to forward for the information and decision of the Principal Inspector General a letter from the Surgeon, 1st District, and copy of a letter addressed to that Officer by the Commissioner of Police respecting the issue of rice to the prisoners instead of *cholam* or *raggy* as ordered by Government.

2. I concur in opinion with Dr. vanSomerén that to yield to the desire of the convicts in reference to diet, without having any proof that it does not agree with them, is simply to give them the privilege of choosing what they will or will not eat. It appears to me that the Surgeon is the proper person to say when this diet does or does not agree (of course after trial); but if the Government wish to give them this option that is another question with which I conceive the Surgeon has nothing to do; he is I presume to act on the orders until they are rescinded—he having at all times the power of ordering men into Hospital and placing them under treatment. I will not issue these orders till I am in possession of your views; but I may add that I imagine the discipline is almost entirely a matter for Colonel Wilson and not for Dr. vanSomerén.

From W. J. VANSOMEREN, Esq., M. D., Surgeon, 1st District; to the Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals, Presidency Division, dated Madras, 10th January 1864, No. 3.

* To be returned.

I have the honor to forward herewith a letter* just received from the Commissioner of Police and copy of my reply to it.

2. To yield to the convicts would seem subversive of all discipline in the Jail; and I therefore dare not do so on my own responsibility. That they may suffer, and this seriously or even fatally if they persist in starving themselves, is very probable; but their suffering or death will be the result of their own obstinacy and not the fault of Government. My own judgment dictates the necessity of firmness in this matter; but I shall gladly defer to authority and do as I am ordered.

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SUNDAY 10th January 1864.

DEAR SIR,

If the men would take their food and prove to me by subsequent sickness that it is unsuitable I could, as I did before, stop the issue of what appears injurious. This however they will not do! They seem determined to reject their rations even on those days when cholera is not issued but when raggy and rice are the cereals available for them; and this although before the cholera was supplied they took raggy without injury! To yield to them would it appear to me put an end to all discipline in the Jail; and the Convicts might then only starve themselves to obtain the rejection of any part of their dietary they please! If they suffer, their suffering will be self-imposed as they need not starve unless they please. Under these circumstances I fear I cannot expect the approval of Government if I direct the issue of rice in lieu of the grains ordered by the Government itself; but I shall be happy to do so if you authorize the procedure and relieve me of all responsibility in the matter.

(Signed) W. J. VANSOMEREN, M. D.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) W. J. VANSOMEREN, M. D.,
Surgeon, 1st District.

SUNDAY, 10th January 1864.

DEAR SIR,

I am informed that the convicts still refuse to receive their rations. As it is now some four days since they have had food it will be advisable to watch their individual condition, in order that matters may not go too far, and I depend upon your directing the issue of rice as soon as you may find such to be necessary. I have reported the state of things to the Chief Secretary this morning.

2. Since seeing you I have had an account of an experiment made with well cleaned cholera in a Jail situated in a rice-consuming country and the result was instant diarrhoea.

(Signed) W. J. WILSON.

(") W. J. VANSOMEREN, M. D.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) J. MAYER,
Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals.

Referred to the Commissioner of Police for report.

FORT SAINT GEORGE,
20th January 1864.

(Signed) A. J. ARBUTHNOT,
Chief Secretary.

No. 13. From Lieutenant-Colonel W. J. WILSON, Commissioner of Police; to the Hon'ble A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 25th January 1864, No. 15.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Principal Inspector General's letter of the 14th instant, No. 13, with three enclosures, and to submit the following report.

2. On the 16th November last the Order of Government noted in the margin was communicated to me, and I immediately issued instructions to the Contractor to adopt the new scale of diet. On the 14th December I

Judicial Department, dated 16th November 1863, No. 1769.

received a letter from the Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, dated 11th idem enclosing another from Dr. vanSomeren, dated 28th November, reporting the illness from diarrhoea of 48 out of 93 convicts, and attributing the same to the fact of the cholera having been insufficiently cleaned and ground. The Principal Inspector General in forwarding the said letter requested me to direct that the grain should be properly cleaned and husked; and on the 4th January instant I informed Dr. vanSomeren that I was prepared to make the issue. Copies of the letters relating to this point marked respectively A., B., C. and D. are hereto appended.

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3. On the afternoon of Tuesday the 5th instant the Jailer reported that the convicts had refused to take their rations, upon which I instructed Mr. Ansell the Deputy Commissioner to proceed to the Jail at once and inquire into the matter. That same evening I was informed that Mr. Haines, the late Jailer who had just resigned his post in order to enter the service of Mr. VansAgnew, had gone to the Jail in the absence of his successor and prior to the arrival of Mr. Ansell, and had of his own authority directed the issue of rice in lieu of the grain objected to by the convicts.

4. On the morning of the 6th instant I visited the Jail myself, and having assembled all the convicts in presence of Dr. vanSomeren, I told them they must receive the rations which had been ordered by Government, and that the issues would be strictly confined to such rations. Upon this they urged that the cholera had already made them very ill, and that they could not eat it without bad consequences. It was then explained to them that if any particular item of food was found to be deleterious to their health it should be discontinued; but that the cleaned cholera must have a fair trial in the first instance.

5. The rations were issued accordingly at the usual time; but the convicts refused to receive them and continued obstinate until Monday the 11th instant, on the afternoon of which day they submitted; and things have gone on quietly ever since although there are still several cases of diarrhoea remaining.

6. With reference to paragraph 3 of the Principal Inspector General's letter I beg to observe that the cleaned cholera was refused by the convicts the very first day it was offered to them, viz., on the 5th instant.

7. It remains for me to correct an erroneous impression which the correspondence at present before Government is calculated to produce. The inference to be drawn therefrom is that while the Medical Authorities were intent upon enforcing a proper trial of the new diet, I on the contrary was disposed to yield to the clamour of the prisoners by causing the issue of rice without any proof that the cholera did not agree with them.

The Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals in so construing my note of the 10th instant was entirely mistaken; and I forward a copy (marked E) of another Note which I sent to Dr. vanSomeren on the same day as soon as I saw from his reply that he had misapprehended the meaning of my first.

Most of the Salem convicts were in a bad state of health when they arrived, and at the time of this occurrence many of them were far from strong—for which reason I was anxious to be apprized at once of the appearance of any alarming symptoms in any of the weaker men which might be supposed to arise from want of food; and I therefore requested Dr. vanSomeren to give me the earliest possible notice of any such occurrence in order that I might report the same before there was any actual danger to life; for I venture to doubt whether the reasoning in that gentleman's letter of the 10th instant, No. 3, to the address of the Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals would have been deemed satisfactory had any of the convicts died on the present occasion.

8. I take this opportunity of forwarding for the information of Government a copy of the Bill for the expenses incurred last month on account of the Salem convicts; the dieting of each of whom costs two annas and eleven pice a day—being about Rupees 5-7-6 for a month of 30 days; whereas a prisoner in the Penitentiary costs Rupees 2-15-6 for a similar period—being at the rate of one anna and seven pice per diem.

9. The weighing and serving out of the rations in the Penitentiary is also a simple matter compared with the time and labor which is entailed by the number of ingredients used in the Grand Jail; and the Comisoply reports that it takes his man four hours to grind, pound, sift and otherwise prepare the cholera before it can be cooked.

10. The Hospital Returns of the Penitentiary and Grand Jail received this day are herewith enclosed.

11. In conclusion I beg to mention the footing upon which I at present stand with regard to the Grand Jail. According to the original orders of Government my duty was confined to furnishing supplies on the requisition of the Sheriff; but that Officer having disclaimed the charge

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of the convicts, and also all responsibility on their account, on the authority of a letter from the Registrar of the High Court to the Secretary to Government, dated 27th June 1863, and of paragraph 2 of the Order of Government noted in the margin, I requested him to instruct the Jailor to receive my orders direct in all matters connected with the Salem convicts, which he did accordingly on the 29th ultimo; and I have since then considered myself to be in charge, although the position is somewhat anomalous.

12. The Principal Inspector General's letter and enclosures are herewith returned.

A.

From R. COLE, Esq., Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, Fort Saint George; to the Commissioner of Police, Madras, dated 11th December 1863, No. 3543.

No. 269, dated the 28th ultimo.
(to be returned.)

I have the honor to forward the enclosed communication from the Surgeon, 1st District, as per margin.

2. As the Establishment of a new dietary is still an experiment I have the honor to request that you will give strict orders for the proper cleaning and husking of the grains so that injurious effects complained of may be obviated.

3. The prisoners will no doubt object to cholom instead of rice; but it is a wholesome grain and is used in many of the Mofussil Jails; and there can be no possible objection to it on the score of health if the grain is properly husked and cleaned and well cooked.

B.

From W. J. VANSOMEREN, Esq., M. D., Surgeon, 1st District; to the Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals, Presidency Division, dated Madras, 28th November 1863, No. 269.

I have the honor to state that since the 25th instant I have admitted into Hospital no less than 48 out of the 93 convicts in Her Majesty's Jail with diarrhoea; and some of the cases were so low as to excite my alarm and require the use of stimulants. Their stools betrayed the presence of undigested cholom, and as it appeared evident enough that this part of their diet was the irritating material, I yesterday directed its discontinuance and the substitution of rice.

2. I am disposed to believe that want of proper grinding and cleaning of the grain in question is the cause of its irritation; and as I fear the necessary preparation of the cereal will never be effected by the prisoners themselves, who are exceedingly opposed to its use, I beg to recommend that should the Principal Inspector General decide on continuing cholom as an article of diet it be furnished to the prisoners thoroughly well cleaned of all husk and bran and finely pulverized.

(Signed) J. MAYER,
Dy. Insp. General of Hospitals.

C.

From Lieutenant-Colonel W. J. WILSON, Commissioner of Police; to R. COLE, Esq., Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 18th December 1863, No. 715 of 1863-64.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt on the 14th instant of your letter of the 11th idem, together with its enclosure,* and to inform you that I shall be prepared to furnish cleaned cholom from any particular date after receiving reasonable notice.

* Herewith returned.

2. It may be as well to mention that the cost of the article prepared according to your requisition will exceed that of the rice formerly supplied.

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3rd February 1864.*

D.

From R. COLE, Esq., Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, Fort Saint George; to the Commissioner of Police, Madras, dated 26th December 1863, No. 3712.

Referring to your letter No. 715 of 18th instant I have the honor to observe that there is no particular necessity to use cholom in any of the Madras Jails if it be more expensive than rice.

2. The diet now under trial is *experimental*; and it was intended chiefly for those Districts in which the dry cereals are cheaper than rice as well as being the common staple food. I would, however, request that the diet may be adhered to as closely as possible to the scale laid down as regards the convicts from Salem; for Government will probably call for a report on the subject of the new scale of food here long, and if it is departed from I shall not be able to give a satisfactory account of the experiment.

(True Copies)

(Signed) W. J. WILSON,
Commissioner of Police.

N. B.—Cleaned cholom, 1 anna per lb. Rice 7 annas 5 pice per lb. (contract price.)

(Signed) W. J. WILSON,
Commissioner of Police.

E.

From Lieutenant-Colonel W. J. WILSON, Commissioner of Police; to W. J. VANSOMEREN, Esq., M. D., dated Madras, 10th January 1864.

I quite concur with you in thinking that the factious resistance of the convicts should not be yielded to; but we cannot go beyond a certain point without endangering life; and as I am unable to determine that point for myself I must trust to you for the information when the time arrives, and we may then consider what should be done.

(True copy)

(Signed) W. J. WILSON, Lieutenant-Colonel,
Commissioner of Police.

PENITENTIARY.

Weekly Report of sick prisoners from 18th to 24th January 1864.

No.	Names.	Diseases.	Remarks.
1	C. E. Ross.....	Affection of the lungs.....	Improving.
2	Moonesawmy.....	Do.	Do.
3	J. Ward.....	Asthma.....	Do.
4	Subapathy.....	Dropsy.....	Better.
5	Shaik Beeram.....	Dysentery.....	Do.
6	Pungaranam.....	Abscess.....	Do.

Total number of prisoners in Jail..... 335.

(Signed) W. AITKEN,
Surgeon, in charge.

MADRAS, 25th January 1864.

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3rd February 1864.

HER MAJESTY'S JAIL.
Weekly Return of sick in Hospital of the convicted prisoners, Monday, 25th January 1864.

Names.	Diseases.	When admitted.	When discharged.	In what state.	When likely to be discharged.	Remarks.
Goorooan.....	Anaemia...	19th Sept. 1863.	.....	Better...	Uncertain.	
Ellon.....	Anasarca..	1st Oct. "	.....	Do. ...	Do.	
Kadrigan.....	Do.	11th "	.....	Do. ...	Do.	
Monnyen.....	Contusion.	8th Jan. 1864.	.....	Do. ...	In a few days	
Chegun.....	Diarrhoea.	17th " "	19th Jan. 1864.	.....	.....	
Venkatsawmy...	Do.	17th " "	19th " "	.....	.....	
Coopen.....	Do.	17th " "	19th " "	.....	.....	
Thorale.....	Do.	17th " "	19th " "	.....	.....	
Chinnaya Moodelly.....	Do.	17th " "	19th " "	.....	.....	
Munny Cutty.....	Do.	17th " "	19th " "	.....	.....	
Rawmen.....	Do.	19th " "	.....	Better...	In a few days	
Venkatsawmy...	Do.	19th " "	22nd Jan. 1864.	.....	.....	
C. Moonyawmy...	Do.	19th " "	22nd " "	.....	.....	
C. Poojary.....	Do.	19th " "	22nd " "	.....	.....	
Mohomed Saib.....	Do.	19th " "	22nd " "	.....	.....	
Annageerow.....	Furunculus	19th " "	.....	Better...	Soon.	
Arrooomoogum...	Atrophia.	22nd " "	.....	Do. ...	Do.	
Murry.....	Dyspepsia.	23rd " "	.....	Do. ...	Do.	
Balamootas.....	Diarrhoea.	24th " "	.....	Relieved.	Do.	
Theroomoorthy.....	Do.	24th " "	.....	Do. ...	Do.	
Venkaramen.....	Do.	24th " "	.....	Do. ...	Do.	
Rungadoo.....	Do.	24th " "	.....	Do. ...	Do.	

93 Convicts.

(Signed) W. J. VANSOMEREN, M. D.,
Surgeon, 1st District.

No. 14.

ORDER THEREON, 3rd February 1864, No. 145.

The facts stated in the correspondence above recorded seem to render it very questionable whether the Diet table, the use of which was ordered in the Proceedings of Government of the 10th November last, for the convicts in the Grand Jail should be continued. The convicts in question appear to be far less healthy than those in the Penitentiary, while the cost of their food is much greater.

2. The Principal Inspector General will report as to the expediency of continuing the present Diet table at the end of a fortnight.

(Signed) A. J. ARBUTHNOT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. J. Tulloch.

Judicial Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following letter
from the Principal Inspector General } (Here enter the January 1864 No. 13.)
Medical Department }
Commissioner of Police } 25th 15.

Order thereon 3rd February 1864 No. 145

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C/R

To the Inspector General Madras Depart
" " Commissioner of Police
" " Sheriff of Madras.

10-22-10

