

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	1574	Press
		~~Mis.~~
Dated	25.9.19	1866

282-283

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Mis

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
25th September 1866.*

No. 282. Read the following letter from the Sanitary Commissioner, Madras, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 17th September 1866, No. 210.

I have the honor to report that, being lately on duty in North Arcot District, I availed myself of the opportunity of inspecting the Jails at Vellore and Chittoor.

2. My report of the inspection of the Jail at Vellore is contained in my Inspection Report of the Vellore Station, submitted to Government on the 13th instant.

3. Since that inspection was made, a severe outbreak of cholera has taken place in this Jail. Seven out of eight deaths occurred in the worst ward of the Jail, in which each inmate was only allowed 26 feet superficial, and 313 cubic feet of space. At the time of my visit to this ward, the air was insufferably hot and close, and the contaminated atmosphere had such a sickening influence as to render remaining in the ward impossible. The action taken on the occasion of the outbreak by Mr. Barlow, the Magistrate, and Dr. Young, the Civil Surgeon, was prompt and judicious. The prisoners were at once removed from the Jail, and encamped on high ground, in the neighbourhood of the station. I earnestly hope that prompt measures will be taken to transfer the prisoners to Barracks in the Fort now empty, and which, with slight alteration, would serve as a temporary Jail. I prefer these barracks, as being better ventilated, to the building known as the Mahals.

4. I may mention that, as was to be expected, the character of cholera which appeared in the Vellore Jail was of a most virulent type.

5. On the 12th September, being at Chittoor, I visited the Chittoor Jail, in company with Dr. deFabeck, the Officer in charge of the Jail.

The time of my visit was 5-30 A. M., before the prisoners were taken out of the wards. The wards were most offensive in smell. The air extraordinarily foul and oppressive, and the prisoners very much over-crowded.

6. No proper provision had been made for the prisoners' requirements during the night. Each prisoner had a small earthen pot as a urinal. These, more or less full, were standing scattered about the floors of the wards; some had been upset and broken, and a most offensive smell of urine pervaded the wards.

In one instance, the prisoners had defæcated on the floor itself.

7. It is absolutely necessary that this state of things should at once cease. There has recently been an outbreak of cholera in this Jail; I believe seventeen cases occurred, and I think I am correct in stating that there were ten deaths. It must be evident that it is dangerous to the health of prisoners that they should, for hours, be breathing such an atmosphere as has been described. I explained to the Officer in charge of the Jail a simple form of night privy, on the dry earth system, in use at the Bangalore Jail, which I recommended should be adopted with as little delay as possible. This will remove an unnecessary aggravation of the evil of over-crowding.

8. That this over-crowding is a serious matter will be apparent when I state that, according to the minimum standard prescribed by Government, namely 36 square feet superficial area, and 648 cubic feet of space, the Chittoor Jail is capable of accommodating 232 prisoners; whereas, at the time of my visit, there were confined in the wards 458 prisoners.

9. The female wards are much over-crowded. According to the prescribed standard, these wards would hold 13 prisoners; I found 39 prisoners in them on the morning of inspection.

10. The ventilation of these wards was still more defective than in the male wards; and this is of very great importance, as the female convicts not only pass the night in these wards, but cook and pound grain during the day in the same wards in which they sleep.

11. The drainage from the female wards and privy runs into the dry ditch within the rampart which surrounds the Jail building; the drain is unpaved, and the sewerage is absorbed into the soil close under the wall of the male wards, and never reaches the outer drain.

12. The female prisoners under trial are mixed with female convicts, and it has occurred that a female civil debtor has been confined with the female convicts.

13. The Jail privy for the male convicts consists of a square space paved with granite, and covered with sand. The prisoners are allowed to defæcate indiscriminately over this space. The indecency and filth of this arrangement need not be described. It would be very easy, until a permanent latrine is built, to provide that the prisoners should be arranged in line, and defæcate into trenches half filled with sifted earth, to be removed by the prisoners, and buried in pits.

14. In the so called Hospital privy, no proper provision whatever had been made. There were no pans for the removal of the excreta. The privy consisted of two narrow unventilated short passages. The patients were supposed to defæcate on the floor, which was of earth. This is a most incomplete arrangement, and in a Hospital, where cases of Diarrhœa and Dysentery may be frequent, might lead to disastrous consequences.

15. I may mention that I found in one of the wards that three persons suspected of insanity, and under observation, were confined with a man known to be insane.

This appears to me to be a most inappropriate and dangerous method of ascertaining the sanity of a prisoner.

16. The foregoing remarks relate chiefly to the state of matters which I observed during my inspection.

17. A Committee has recently (20th January 1866) reported on the improvements requisite in the Jail at Chittoor. This report was not forwarded to me officially for my opinion, but I have been favored with a perusal of it by Colonel Boileau, the Superintending Engineer of the 4th Division.

18. The Civil Surgeon, who was on the Committee, strongly recommended that the external rampart of the Jail, which most seriously prevents the ventilation of all the wards, should be entirely removed, and in this Colonel Boileau concurred. The Civil and Session Judge and the Executive Engineer declined to recommend this, on the ground of the cost.

19. In like manner, the Civil Surgeon recommended the lowering of the outer wall, which surrounds the Hospital, and renders even tolerable ventilation of the wards impossible.

This was not considered necessary by the other Members.

20. The removal of the rampart and of the Hospital wall, and the erection at a greater distance of safe enclosures, are absolutely necessary on sanitary grounds.

Entirely new female wards are absolutely necessary.

New Latrines must be constructed for the male prisoners, for the female prisoners, and for the Hospital.

The drainage of the prison must be made.

The ventilation of the wards must be completed as recommended by the Committee.

These alterations will be costly; the removal of the rampart alone will cost 10,300 Rupees.

21. When the Central Jail at Vellore is built, it has been calculated that prison accommodation for only 143 prisoners will be required at Chittoor (vide report by Messrs. Rohde and Ellis on the additional Jail accommodation required in the Madras Presidency, and the measures to be taken for improving existing Jails).

22. It seems worth consideration whether it would not be better to build a small Jail at Chittoor for this number of prisoners, rather than to convert the large and ill suited buildings that now compose the Jail into a healthy place of confinement for so small a number of prisoners.

Some of the materials of the present Jail would probably come into use for the new Jail, or would, if sold, reduce the cost of the new building.

23. In the meantime, I trust the Government will issue orders to remedy the dangerous over-crowding of this Jail, by shutting out the short sentenced prisoners, if they cannot, as is probable, be transferred to other Jails, and that care will be taken to remedy the most obvious defects in management which I have felt it my duty to bring to notice.

24. I would finally bring to notice that, on the recent occurrence of epidemic cholera in the Jail at Chittoor, the prisoners should, under the Jail Rules, which have been sanctioned by Government, vide Rules 427, 428, 430, have been moved into camp.

This was not done, and I think the reasons for not observing this important precaution against the spread of epidemic disease among prisoners should have been reported to the Government.

*Extract from a Report of the inspection of Vellore, by the Honorable R. S. Ellis, c. n.,
Sanitary Commissioner.*

JAIL.

46. The prisoners are confined in a portion of the Fort at its south end; the sleeping compartments being a series of small narrow rooms under the Fort wall, opening into a narrow courtyard, which is nothing more than an enclosed roadway between the ramparts and a part of the interior fortifications.

The court-yard is entered by a gate-way, on each side of which are two rooms, one of which is occupied by the Jailer, the other by prisoners.

The room* on the West, occupied as a sleeping apartment by prisoners, is 32' x 31' x 12' containing a superficial area of 992 square feet, and 11,904 cubic feet. The only ventilation is by means of four small windows, two of which open into the passage leading into the prison.

From its dimensions, this room is only calculated to hold 18 prisoners, at the rate of 648 cubic feet of breathing space per man, which would give each a superficial area of 55 square feet.

N. B.—If the prisoners were allotted at the rate of 36 feet per man, from the lowness of the walls they would only get 440 cubic feet of breathing space.

* Since the above was written, a severe outbreak of cholera has taken place in this Jail, and out of eight deaths which have occurred up to date (September 1st), seven have been amongst the prisoners sleeping in this room.

At the time of my visit there were 38 prisoners sleeping in it, so that each man had only 26 feet superficial, and 313 cubic feet of space.

The air of this room, which was visited an hour after it had been vacated, was insufferably hot and close, and the contaminated atmosphere had such a sickening influence as to render a stay in this apartment impossible.

There are five other sleeping apartments within the courtyard, of which the following table shows the dimensions :—

	Length		Breadth		Height		Superfi- cial area.	Cubic area.	No. of prisoners allotted to it.	Superfi- cial space afforded.	Cubic space afforded.
	ft.	In.	ft.	In.	ft.	In.					
No. 1 Room.....	27	6	6	6	10	0	178	1780	8	22	220
„ 2 do.	108	0	7	0	10	0	756	7560	38	19	190
„ 3 do.	92	0	7	0	10	0	644	6440	32	20	200
„ 4 do.	92	0	7	0	10	0	644	6440	32	20	200
„ 5 do.	93	0	7	0	10	0	854	8540	38	22	220
Two recesses!....	14	0	7	0	10	0					

It is unnecessary to add that all these rooms are dangerously over-crowded, and are intolerably hot and close. No. 1 room, being in the corner of the yard, is more so than the rest, and the prisoners complained so much of the heat, that the authorities were obliged to reduce the number of occupants to four. All the rooms are insufficiently ventilated, the only air entering being by the windows, and some small open brick work at the upper part of the wall. This defective ventilation should be at once remedied by ground ventilation, and pot ventilators in the roof throughout all the sleeping rooms. The doors of the cell should be iron-barred instead, of panelled.

An examination of the following table shows the urgent necessity which exists for reducing the number of prisoners confined in this Jail :—

	Number to be accommodat- ed at the regulation allotment.	Number sleep- ing in the rooms by night.
No. 1 ...	2	8
No. 2 ...	10	38
No. 3 ...	9	32
No. 4 ...	9	32
No. 5 ...	13	38
Room near the gate-way	18	38
	61	186

From this, it is seen that more than three times the number are accommodated in the space now afforded to each prisoner, averaging 21 superficial feet and 210 cubic feet, and this in rooms which are almost entirely unventilated.

Although it is absolutely necessary to bring the over-crowding of this Jail to the notice of the Government, it is a fact that the prisoners in the Vellore Jail are, and have been, generally healthy. I can only attribute this to their being the whole day at work in the open air, to their having sufficient but not exhausting work, and to their being carefully dieted. Should an epidemic occur, however, in this Jail, the mortality would most probably in a few hours, be terrible. We have the recent example in Nellore of the great loss of life caused by an epidemic in a crowded Jail, and I earnestly hope that, until a new Jail can be constructed, the number of prisoners in the Jail at Vellore will be reduced, or that temporary accommodation by hutting will be provided for prisoners not convicted of heinous offences.

Cook-houses.

47. The cook-houses consist of a low tiled shed, which runs round the court-yard, and are quite sufficient for the purpose.

Conservancy.

48. The Jail is thoroughly clean, and its conservancy arrangements are carefully attended to.

Night urinals.

49. The arrangement of the night urinals is not altogether satisfactory. The plan adopted consists in having an opening in the lower part of the wall through which a granite channel leads from a small receptacle inside the room to a chatty placed outside. So long as the channel is well covered with coal tar, and the chatties are new, the system answers very well; but in one case it was noticed that the chatty was sodden with urine, which passed freely into a small cess pit, filled with earth, which, having become saturated, was most abominably offensive.

Glazed earthenware receptacles would prevent the recurrence of this. A better plan would be to have a vessel, partially filled with earth, inside the room, which could be removed every morning.

Latrine arrangements.

50. At present, all the prisoners are marched out every morning to a part of the Fort in the vicinity of the Jail, where trenches are dug for the reception of the excreta. These are covered in daily with earth, and the spot, at the period of my visit, was entirely free from smell; but during rainy weather I should think these trenches are apt to become offensive. No complaint, however, has been made on this account concerning them.

It is proposed to give up this arrangement, and, with this view, a latrine, on the dry earth principle, has been commenced within an enclosure at the end of the Jail. At the time of my visit, this consisted of a shed with a simple tiled roof, supported on masonry pillars, and open all round. It is intended to construct masonry troughs beneath it, on the same principle as the one at the Bangalore Central Jail.

A great objection to its site is that, from its enclosed position, it is inaccessible to a cart, and all the excreta must be carried from it through the Jail court-yard; for this reason, I am of opinion that it would be a better arrangement to cover in the present latrines with a light roof, and keep the present shed for a work-shop.

Work-shops.

51. Work-shops are apparently much required, as the prisoners have, at present, to work under small thatched sheds within the Jail enclosure, which, from the combustible materials they are constructed with, are liable to be burned down.

Ablution arrangements.

52. The prisoners perform their ablution round the sides of a well within the Jail enclosure, the ground around which is paved, so that percolation in the well is prevented. The water, as it is used, runs off by a drain into the Fort ditch.

Water supply.

53. The water used by the prisoners for drinking purposes is obtained from the well just referred to, which stands within the enclosure. The water is slightly brackish, but not sufficient-ly so to render it disagreeable to the taste. The water is all raised by chatties.

In addition to this well, there is a chunam reservoir, which is supplied with water from the stone reservoir in the Fort, which receives its supply from the Soorea Goonta tank by an under ground channel.

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54. The drainage of the interior of the Jail is provided for a storm water drain, which carries off the rain and other refuse to the Fort ditch, beneath the ramparts. There is an ammoniacal smell in parts of this drain from the prisoners passing urine into it.

Drainage.

55. Outside the Jail is a building, containing two rooms, which is used as a Subsidiary Jail. The largest of these rooms is 51 x 12 x 15, with a superficial area of 612 square feet, and cubic area 9180, giving accommodation to 17 prisoners. The ventilation was deficient; ground ventilators should be introduced. The smaller room is 25 x 12 x 15, with a superficial area of 300 square feet, and cubic area 4500 feet. There is space for eight prisoners in this room. The same remarks as to the ventilation of the other room apply equally to this.

Subsidiary Jail.

Health of the Prisoners.

56. The sick Prisoners are treated at present in the Garrison Hospital.

The following return shows the number of Prisoners confined in this Jail, during 1861-62 63-64 and 65 :—

	Remained on the 31st December.	Admitted during the year.	Average daily strength.	Number of deaths.
1860 ...	178	...	...	...
1861 ...	181	9	180	4
1862 ...	167	19	175	2
1863 ...	179	19	179	7
1864 ...	228	79	192	1
1865 ...	181	25	186	15

The following table shows the sickness and mortality amongst the prisoners confined in this Jail, during the same period as above :—

	Admissions in Hospital.	Deaths in Hospital.	Average daily sick.
1861...	255	4	15
1862...	212	2	4½
1863...	170	7	5
1864...	164	1	5
1865...	100	15	10

Diseases which have contributed to make up the admissions in the above Return.

	Fevers.	Diarrhoea.	Dysentery.	Cholera.	Atrophy.	Anasarca.	Diseases of the lungs.	Diseases of the liver.	Rheumatism.	Veneral.	Ulcers and sores.	Wounds and injuries.	Diseases of the eye.	Diseases of the skin.	Smallpox.	Other diseases.	Total.
1861.....	72	11	5	...	1	1	9	...	5	...	39	54	11	8	...	39	255
1862.....	96	17	2	...	1	...	7	...	16	...	27	15	...	1	...	30	212
1863.....	54	6	5	...	1	1	1	...	8	2	48	9	1	2	8	24	170
1864.....	27	14	6	...	...	...	5	1	7	2	76	10	1	1	...	14	164
1865.....	15	11	5	...	8	...	6	1	6	...	26	4	...	2	...	16	100

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Return showing the deaths from 1861 to 1865.

	Fevers.	Dysentery.	Atrophy.	Anasarca.	Diseases of the lungs.	Rheumatism.	Ulcers and sores.	Other diseases.	Total.
1861 ...	3	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	4
1862 ...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
1863 ...	2	...	...	1	1	1	...	2	7
1864 ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
1865 ...	...	6	3	1	3	1	...	1	15

The above returns yield the following results, which, contrasted with the sickness and mortality in other Jails, must be considered very favorable :—

	Sickness and mortality calculated on the average daily strength.		Sickness and mortality calculated on the entire prison population.	
	Admissions in Hospital per 1,000.	Deaths per 1,000.	Admissions in Hospital per 1,000.	Deaths per 1,000.
1861 ...	83.3	22.2	1363.6	21.3
1862 ...	26.2	11.4	1060.0	10.0
1863 ...	27.9	39.1	913.9	37.6
1864 ...	26.04	5.2	635.6	3.8
1865 ...	53.7	80.6	395.2	59.2
Mean...	43.4	31.7	873.6	26.3

The chief admissions into Hospital consist of ulcers and sores; then fevers, diarrhoea, and dysentery. No admissions have taken place from cholera during the past five years.

The greatest mortality occurred last year, when 15 deaths are recorded, six of which are from dysentery, and three from diseases of the lungs.

It may be remarked that, up to the present time, the mode of calculating the amount of sickness and mortality in Jails is most unsatisfactory, from the incorrectness of the basis upon which the health of the prisoners is estimated, and contrasted with that of individuals living under other conditions.

Up to the present time, the basis of the calculation has been the average daily number of prisoners confined in Jail throughout the year, without any regard to the actual time during which each individual is confined, or without any reference to his previous health, habits, or condition of life.

The result of this mode of ascertaining the sanitary condition of a Jail is to place it in too unfavorable a light; while, on the other hand, to estimate it simply on the entire number of prisoners confined during the year, gives a too favorable return of sickness and mortality.

Dr. Mouat, the Inspector General of Jails, Lower Provinces, Bengal, makes the following remarks concerning Jail statistics in his report for 1861, which bear very forcibly upon the point in question :—

“ The risks of the Jails commence from the moment the doors are closed upon the prisoners, and the conditions of age, previous occupation, temperament, crime, habits when at liberty, and other similar circumstances are so very different, that no correct inferences can possibly be

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
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"drawn from a system of calculation which takes no heed of those conditions, and clubs them together as if they were picked lives, such as those of soldiers, or the constituents of Insurance Societies, from which all doubtful lives and risks are eliminated. The only rigorous method of estimating the actual risks of imprisonment in the Lower Provinces, will be to ascertain the exact proportion which the mortality of each class bears to the whole number of that class in custody during each year, and this calculation should extend to the conditions of age, crime, sentence, previous occupation, and state of health on admission. An entire change in the form and details of the sanitary returns will alone accomplish this purpose."

There can be little doubt, then, that until some uniform method of calculating the health of Jails be adopted, from which the disturbing elements described above are taken into consideration, our present mode of forming an opinion as to the sanitary condition of our Jail population must be considered very untrustworthy.

I believe that the Jail statistics of Great Britain are, from the same cause, at present imperfect, and I know that Dr. Farr, the Registrar General, is preparing a scientific formula for calculating the rate of sickness and mortality in the fluctuating numbers of inmates of Hospitals and Jails.

No. 283.

ORDER THEREON, 25th September 1866, No. 1514.

The above report, and a copy of paragraphs 46 to 56 of the Commissioner's report on the Military Station of Vellore, will be forwarded to the Inspector General of Jails, for his immediate consideration.

2. The Governor in Council directs that measures be at once adopted for remedying the more pressing evils noticed by the Commissioner, and for reducing the number of prisoners confined in the Jails of Vellore and Chittoor. A fortnightly report on the measures adopted will be submitted to Government by the Inspector General.

3. The Officer in charge of the Chittoor Jail will be called upon to explain how he has tolerated the filthy state of that Jail, and also to report on paragraphs 15 and 24 of the report above recorded.

(True Extract).

Secretary to Government.

To the Inspector General of Jails.
" Sanitary Commissioner.

Erd. J. H. Burns.

No. 210

OFFICE OF SANITARY COMMISSIONER
Madras, 17th September 1866.

From

The Honorable R. F. Ellis M.D.

Sanitary Commissioner Madras,

To

The Honorable A. J. Arbutnot
Chief Secretary to Government
Fort Saint George.

SIR,

I have the honor to report that being lately on duty in North Arcot District, I availed myself of the opportunity of inspecting the Jails at Vellore and Chittoor.

2. My report of the inspection of the Jail at Vellore is contained in my inspection report of the Vellore Station, submitted to Government on the 13th Instant.

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4. I may mention that, as was to be expected, the character of cholera which appeared in the Vellore jail was of a most virulent type.

5. On the 12th September being at Chittoor, I visited the Chittoor jail in company with Dr O'Leary, the officer in charge of the jail. The time of my visit was 5.30 A.M., before the prisoners were taken out of the wards.

The wards were most offensive in smell. The air extraordinarily foul and oppressive, and the prisoners very much overcrowded.

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18. The Civil Surgeon who was on the Committee strongly recommended that the external rampart of the jail which most seriously prevents the ventilation of all the wards, should be entirely removed, and in this Colonel Baileon concurred.

The Civil and Sessions Judge and the Executive Engineer declined to recommend this on the ground of the cost.

19. In like manner, the Civil Surgeon recommended the lowering of the outer wall which surrounds the hospital and renders even tolerable ventilation of the wards impossible.

This was not considered necessary by the other members.

20. The removal of the rampart and of the hospital wall and the erection at a greater distance of safe enclosures, are absolutely necessary on sanitary grounds.

Entirely new Female Wards are absolutely necessary. New latrines must be constructed for the Male prisoners, for the Female prisoners and for the Hospital.

The drainage of the prison must be made. The ventilation of the wards must be completed as recommended by the Committee.

These alterations will be costly, the removal of the rampart alone will cost 10,300 Rupees.

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18. Strongly of the ventilator removed. The Engineer of the 19. In the low the situation of this member 20. The wall safe in ground.

unconformable

Judicial 1886 Sept 25

The Sanitary Commissioner Madras

To The Chief Secretary to Government Fort St. George

Dated 17th Sept 1886
Recd 18th Sept 1886
No 2071
No 210

Submits the inspection report of the Jails at Vellore and Chittoor with certain suggestions for relieving their overcrowding.

Herewith find Rule & Sanction

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and a copy of the Judicial Dept. 25th Sept. 1886. No. 1514 to Mr. A. J. B. Atkinson Secretary to the Jail Committee. 7/13.

Judicial 21 Sanitary Commr - 17 Sept 1886

25th Sept 1886 No. 1514. The above report & a copy of paras 40 to 56 of the Commission's report on the Military Station of Vellore will be forwarded to the Inspector Genl of Jails for his immediate consideration.

The Govt directs that measures be at once adopted for remedying the evils noticed by the Commr & for reducing the number of prisoners confined in the Jails of Vellore & Chittoor. A fortnightly report on the measures adopted will be submitted to

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pt.

The Officer in
charge of the Chilton
fail will be called
upon to explain
how he has tolerated
the filthy state of
that fail. and
also to report on
paras 15 & 24 of
the report above re-
corded.

Instructions
will be issued
in the D.P.M. for
the preparation of
an approximate
estimate for building
a new fail at Chilton
as suggested in

22
para 22. The esti-
mate should be fur-
nished within
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the order -

I. D.

To the Insp. Genl of Sails { despo 28/9
" Sanitary Comm -
" Report returned to the Insp. Genl 10/11
" Military Reports - despo 2/10
" id. S. B. Atkinson 24/9 despo 25/10/11

Medical 1866. Report.

W. E. D. 1872.

Proceedings of 6th 75

5772 2303-2357.

Total 25 S. 1866-1867.

C. C.