

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	1879	Press
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Dated	21-11-	1887

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Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
21st November 1867.

No. 249. Read the following Extract from the Proceedings of the Governor General in Council in the Home Department, dated Simla, the 2nd October 1867, No. 67-5057.

Read an extract from the Proceedings of the Governor General in Council in the Public Works Department, No. 637C., dated the 27th August, forwarding, for consideration of the subject in this Department, an extract from the Proceedings of the Sanitary Commissioner for Bengal, for February last, noticing the high rate of mortality amongst the inmates of the Dulunda Lunatic Asylum, and attributing it to the effects of the long distances traversed by the patients between their homes and the Asylum.

REMARKS.—These papers practically suggest the multiplication of Lunatic Asylums, mainly on the grounds urged by the Sanitary Commissioner, that the present asylums in Calcutta are over-crowded, and that the removal of lunatics from long distances to Central Asylums greatly increases the mortality among new admissions.

2. There can be no doubt that the view of the Sanitary Commissioner regarding the evil effect of the long journeys that must at present be undertaken by many lunatics before reaching a Central Asylum, is, to a certain extent, a correct view. The Governor General in Council, however, does not consider that it forms any sufficient argument for the maintenance or increase of the system of small local asylums.

3. Experience of the general results of the system has shown that its continuance would be a grave mistake. Its practical result in each district has been that the lunatics have been left very much to the care of Burkundauz Warders, and in most cases, if not actually maltreated, they have been much neglected, receiving none of the constant and systematic care, watchful kindness, and treatment of the mind and fancy, as well as of the body, which are so essentially necessary for their cure. The best, indeed, that can be said for these local asylums is that the patients are better off than if left at large, in regard to food, shelter, clothing, and medical treatment for any physical disease.

4. This must always be the case with local asylums of the existing kind; for few Medical Officers have the peculiar qualifications required for their efficient management in regard to the cure or alleviation of mental disease, and the District Medical Officers are often much too fully occupied with their regular work to devote the necessary attention to the patients under their charge. Moreover, the cost of the buildings and the superintendence requisite to put local asylums on an efficient footing would be too great to admit of the adoption of this remedy of the acknowledged evil.

5. Central Asylums, on the other hand, possess the very great advantage of rendering it possible to obtain for their inmates scientific treatment by men possessing peculiar qualifications for the duty. Hence result constant care, cleanliness, kindness, and improved treatment from constant experience and observation in each individual case.

6. These advantages are so great as, in the opinion of the Governor General in Council, to compensate for the disadvantages of the distance from which many of the patients have to be brought; but these disadvantages may be greatly

lessened by a judicious increase of the number of Central Asylums, and by the systematic arrangements for the transport of patients which the increase in asylums would render more feasible than at present.

7. There are no means of estimating with any degree of certainty the number of lunatics in proportion to the population in any Province. In Bengal, indeed, even the extent of the population is not known, and that element, therefore, cannot be taken into consideration in calculating the number and size of the asylums which it would be advisable at present to establish. A beginning should, however, be made, by gradually fixing asylums in the large and populous tracts now far removed from such institutions, and where it may be certain that patients sufficient will be forthcoming for an asylum. The buildings, of course, should be of a moderate size at first, on a plan admitting of extension to the largest size deemed expedient in this climate. In the selection of sites, regard should not alone be paid to their central position with reference to the population for which the asylum is intended to provide, though at the same time this should not be overlooked. Healthiness of site and facilities of access are important considerations; but, if possible, patients should not be removed to a climate differing in any great degree from their native one.

8. In the Punjab there is but one regular and permanent asylum at Lahore. Clearly two more at least are required—one towards Peshawur, and another towards Mooltan—while the temporary asylum now at Delhi should be enlarged and made permanent.

9. In the North-Western Provinces there is one at Bareilly, while others have been sanctioned for Benares and Agra, and another might be built at Allahabad, or Cawnpore, or between these two places; and this last named asylum would also provide for two or three of the Districts of Oudh.

10. In Oudh there is an asylum at Lucknow, and another might be allowed at Fyzabad, to provide also for the Bustee and the whole or part of the Goruckpore District.

11. In the Central Provinces, there is one at Nagpore, and another temporary asylum at Jubbulpore. If the latter were placed on a permanent basis, these two would probably suffice for some time to come.

12. In Bengal there are four—at Calcutta, Dacca, Cuttack, and Patna. The three first-named amply provide, it is believed, for the southern portion of Bengal, but Central and East and West Bengal (including the Hazareebaugh Districts) are quite unprovided for. In Central Bengal, Moorsshedabad, or, as healthier, Rajshahye, would be central; but an asylum there would probably find an ample supply of patients from the purely Bengal Districts in its neighbourhood, and, at any rate, to send to it Natives of the districts above Rajmahal would be fatal, and a second asylum at or about Bhagulpore would be required. In Western Bengal, an asylum in the neighbourhood of Rancegunge would suffice. These would provide very well for Bengal Proper, but Assam would require an asylum for itself and for Cooch Behar and the northern part of Rungpore.

13. The Governor General in Council would be glad to receive from the local Governments and Administrations an expression of their views in regard to the best locations in which commencements might be made gradually to carry out some such

scheme as that suggested in the foregoing remarks, and a statement of the places in which the urgent need for these Asylums is greatest.

ORDERED that these remarks be communicated to the Governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the North-Western Provinces, the Punjab; the Chief Commissioners of Oudh, the Central Provinces, and British Burmah; the Commissioner of Mysore; and the Resident at Hyderabad.

(True Extract).

(Signed) E. C. BAYLEY,
Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. 250. ORDER THEREON, 21st November 1867, No. 1879.

Resolved that the foregoing Proceedings of the Governor General in Council, regarding Central Lunatic Asylums, be forwarded to the Public Works Department, in order that the Superintending Engineers of the 1st and 6th Divisions may be called upon to submit, with as little further delay as possible, plans and estimates for Asylums at Vizagapatam and Trichinopoly.

2. It is observed that the Superintending Engineer, 1st Division, was informed in G. O., dated the 1st May 1867, No. 699, that plans and estimates were required for an Asylum at Vizagapatam.

See further G. O., dated 2nd July 1867, No. 1048.

3. The Inspector General, Medical Department, will report, after communication with the Magistrates of Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Madura, and Tinnevely, for what number of lunatics accommodation should be provided, in order to meet the probable requirements of each of these districts in the Asylum to be built at Trichinopoly.

(True Extract).

R. S. ELLIS,
Chief Secretary.

To the Public Works Department.

" Inspector General, Medical Department.
" Magistrate of Vizagapatam.
" Do. of Bellary.
" Do. of Malabar.
" Do. of Trichinopoly.
" Do. of Tanjore.
" Do. of Madura.
" Do. of Tinnevely.

Exd. J. H. Burns.