

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	415	Press Mis.
Dated	13 - 3 - 1918	1867

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415

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
13th March 1867.

Read the following papers:—

No. 168. From the Inspector General of Jails, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Berhampore, 2nd March 1867.

In December last, the Superintendent of the Jail at Bellary called upon the Officer in Medical charge to give his opinion as to the cause of the great increase in the mortality of the Jail. Dr. Stevens stated, in reply, that most of the casualties had occurred amongst the prisoners received during the famine, who, at the time of admission, were in an emaciated, anæmic state from previous hardship and starvation, and many of whom were of advanced age. He went on to say that the sanitary condition of the Jail was very satisfactory, and the diet good; that there was no over-crowding; and that, in his opinion, the mortality was not to be attributed to any defect in the Jail. Early in February, Dr. Stevens made a second report to the same effect, and stated that the only remedy he could suggest was release, which would perhaps prolong life for a few months. Captain McLeod, in forwarding these reports, states that, in addition to the reasons given, he believes that the continuation of the mortality is also owing to some unseen cause, and he recommends that a Committee of Medical Officers should be appointed for the purpose of investigating the matter thoroughly, before resorting to such a step as release. On my return to this place from Russelcondah on the 28th ultimo, I received a copy of the remarks made by the Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals during a recent inspection of the Bellary Jail. That Officer concurs with Dr. Stevens, and states that nothing short of the release of some 40 prisoners will be of any avail, and that even that measure would only tend to prolong their lives for a month or six weeks.

2. The points now to be decided are the following, viz., whether it is necessary or expedient to appoint a Committee of Medical Officers for the purpose of investigating the causes of the mortality, and whether it is advisable to release a certain number of prisoners on the score of their health. With regard to the first question, I would observe that the Jail has already been carefully inspected by two experienced Medical Officers. These gentlemen both come to the same conclusion as to the causes of the mortality; and as the reasons assigned appear sufficient to account for it, without seeking for any other cause, I do not think it necessary that a special Committee should be formed.

3. I do not know of any precedent for the discharge from Jail of prisoners awaiting trial, and the ruling of Government upon one or two recent occasions is opposed to the release of convicts upon the ground of bad health, unless it is clearly shown that the diseases from which they are suffering have been contracted within the Jail, and also that they have a fair chance of recovery if released. The prisoners at Bellary do not come within either category, and as the Medical Officers anticipate very little benefit from their release, I do not feel warranted in recommending it; but, as the circumstances are somewhat exceptional, I have the honor to submit the correspondence for the orders of Government. It will be observed that the ordinary Jail diet is good and sufficient, and that all the more sickly prisoners are receiving extras, in the shape of Arrack, cod liver oil, and meat. They are not in a state to earn their livelihood if set at large, and would, in all probability, find a difficulty in obtaining a bare subsistence, to say nothing of extras. I, therefore, think it

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questionable whether their release could be of any advantage whatever beyond the saving of the cost of their maintenance.

From Surgeon Major J. B. STEVENS, F. R. C. S., Garrison Surgeon of Bellary, to the Superintendent of the District Jail, Bellary; dated Bellary, 27th December 1866, No. 29 J.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 26th instant, calling on me for an opinion as to the cause of the great increase of mortality in the Jail during the last month.

2. I must bring to your notice that most of the casualties have occurred in prisoners who were convicted during the time of the great distress all over the Districts, and were admitted into the Jail in a very emaciated, anæmic state, also dropsical, from previous hardship and starvation, many of them very far advanced in age—some appeared to be upwards of seventy years; there are many more in the Jail I could point out, who, in all human probability, will not live out their sentence, from the same causes.

3. The sanitary arrangements of the Jail are very satisfactory; the diet is the best of the kind, sufficient in quantity, and there is no over-crowding—in fact, each man has more than his allotted space. I am of opinion that the present mortality is caused by the prisoners being old and worn out, and much reduced by starvation, over which there was no control, and is not attributed to any defect in the Jail, which, I consider, is in a healthy state, far more so than the Jails at Cudapah or Kurnool.

4. I shall be glad to meet you at the Jail to-morrow morning, at half past six, if convenient to you.

5. I will, as you suggest, examine daily all the men at light work, at my morning visit.

From Surgeon Major J. B. STEVENS, F. R. C. S., Garrison Surgeon of Bellary, to the Superintendent of the District Jail, Bellary; dated Bellary, 2nd February 1867, No. 35.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 32, of the 30th ultimo, regarding the great mortality in the Jail during the last month, in reply to which, I beg to draw your attention to my letter of the 27th of December. Since that time, there has been no improvement, and it is not the result of any epidemic, or from any defect in the internal arrangement in the Jail, but solely from the very unhealthy and debilitated state the men were in, when received into the Jail, and from old age.

2. There are still many men at light work. I find that there is some very slight improvement in their general health, from the extra diet and treatment they have received; still, at the same time, I am of opinion that very few of these will survive the period of their sentence, and the only remedy I could suggest would be their release, and this measure would, perhaps, prolong life but for a few months.

3. There are many men waiting trial, some as far back as the month of October; many of them are in a very unsatisfactory state of health.

From Captain W. S. McLEOD, Superintendent of the District Jail, Bellary, to the Inspector General of Jails; dated Bellary, 5th February 1867, No. 39.

In continuation of my letter, No. 38, of the 30th instant, I have the honor to forward, in original, the report called forth by me, and furnished by Dr. Stevens, for your information, as also a copy of a letter to my address referred to in the report.

2. I myself observed the mortality to be principally among those men who were admitted during the great scarcity that prevailed in the months of June, July, August, and September, and drew Dr. Stevens' special attention to those cases, in a letter to which his of the 27th December is a reply. The mortality during the past month also has been chiefly confined to men admitted during the famine. Dr. Stevens, you will observe, is well satisfied as to the general sanitary condition of the Jail, and in no way attributes the mortality to any thing connected with the Jail itself.

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He suggests, as the only remedy whereby to mitigate the mortality, to release many men now at light work; but, before such a step were taken, I would recommend that a Commission of Medical Officers be appointed to investigate thoroughly the causes of the mortality and its continuation. I am of opinion there must be some unseen cause at work beyond the scarcity of the past season, though, no doubt, this has, to a great measure, tended to increase the sickness in the Jail.

Extracts from the Weekly Diary of the Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals, Ceded Districts, dated Bellary, 4th February 1867.

"31st January 1867, 8 A. M.—Inspected Jail Hospital; all clean and well arranged.

Sick:—Diarrhoea 1, Dysentery 1, Rheumatism 1, Atrophica 7, Anasarca 10, other lesser diseases 4—total 24."

"I inspected carefully all the men at light duty, as well as those in Hospital. There are 24 prisoners, for whom there is not a hope of recovery, and, in my opinion, nothing remains, as I have informed the Superintendent, but to apply to Government for their release; they are simply skin and bone, with swollen feet, hands, and faces; and in many instances their abdomens are full and bloated, in others quite flat; the pulse is small and feeble; their eyes are bloodless; and they are scarcely able to move. Their release might possibly extend their lives, at the furthest, one month. I inspected these same men on the 12th instant, and then told both the Superintendent and Garrison Surgeon just what I have above stated, since which three have died. I ordered the men should receive, daily, a dram of Arrack each, and Cod Liver Oil twice a day, and mutton daily."

"1st February, 6½ A. M.—Visited Jail Hospital, in company with the Garrison Surgeon, owing to the great mortality amongst the prisoners. On the 12th January, I also inspected the weak or light-work men; there were then 24 in a most wretched state. I have now selected 20 more, whom I have ordered to be dieted and treated as those on the 12th, adding ½ a dram of Arrack to each prisoner morning and evening. The first 24 showed a decided improvement in their weight, but I have very little hopes of any out of the whole 44 ever recovering. There are 118 underwaiting-trial prisoners in Jail, and 2 in Hospital; one died in Hospital this morning. I inspected all these carefully; 10 of them are very old, infirm, and utterly emaciated, and though they were bad in condition when they came into Jail, they have continued gradually to get worse, and I doubt their living to get through their trial. They have all been incarcerated between October and January inclusive. There is no hiding that the state of the Jail is deplorable as regards these 164 prisoners, and very many of them will die within a month. All that is possible to be done is done, and nothing can be healthier and better than the Jail since the late improvements have begun to be carried out. The cause is simply the weakly state in which the men were first admitted, and that was dependent on the famine so general over this District."

"3rd February, 7 A. M.—I inspected Jail, and every convicted and underwaiting-trial prisoner. Those before commented on by me, as being in a weakly state, are, I think, a little better—decidedly, not worse. I find, on signing the books of the Hospital, that 52 deaths have taken place in December and January last—25 in the former, and 27 in the latter. I have ordered a generous diet, a dram of Arrack to every weakly patient, in the hope of arresting this terrible mortality; but I fear that anything short of release to some forty will be of no avail, and even such a step would only tend to prolong their lives for a month or six weeks."

(True Extracts).

OFFICE OF PRINL. INSPR. GENL.,
MEDL. DEPT, FORT SAINT GEORGE,
11th February 1867.

(No 534.—) To the Inspector General of Jails,
for such notice as he may deem necessary.

(Signed) J. SHAW,
Prinl. Inspr. Genl., Medl. Dept.

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13th March. 1867

No. 169. From the Inspector General of Jails, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 11th March 1867, No. 154.

With reference to my letter of the 2nd instant, No. 2, regarding the health of the prisoners in the Bellary Jail, I have the honor to annex copy of a remark made by the Superintendent upon the "Sickness and Mortality" Return for the past month.

2. The daily average number of prisoners was 802. The total admissions were 70 and the deaths 16, viz., one from Diarrhoea, four from Anasarca, and eleven from Atrophy. Thirteen of the deceased were convicts, and three under-trial prisoners. All were males.

Copy of Remark on the Mortality Return of the Bellary Jail for February 1867.

"Though the admissions from Atrophy, and deaths from the same disease, have been great, the general appearance of the men is considerably improved during the past month. There does not appear to be the same languid, worn spirit to so great an extent as previously existed."

(Signed) W. S. McLEOD,

Superintendent of the Jail.

No. 170. ORDER THEREON, 13th March 1867, No. 415.

As it appears that the sickness in the Bellary Jail is not attributable to diseases contracted within the Jail, and as it is questionable whether, in the majority of cases, the invalid prisoners, who are now receiving a liberal diet and have the advantage of efficient medical care, would benefit by being set at liberty, the Governor in Council concurs in the opinion of the Inspector General of Jails that valid grounds have not been shown for sanctioning their release.

2. The Governor in Council desires to be furnished with a statement, showing the number of prisoners under trial who have been in confinement for more than one month.

(True Extract).

Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector General of Jails.
" Session Judge of Bellary.

Exd. J. H. Buras.

Judicial Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

*Read the following
letter from the Inspector Genl. of Jails.
Dated 2^d & 11th March/67 No. 154*

Order thereon 13th March 1867 No. 415

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JP

W.S.

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To the Insp. Genl. of Prisons - Dispt 14/8.
Reference for
H. H. H. - Dispt 14/8.

Sickings v. Butler
June -

Exhibit 1868. Department.

No. 415

PROCEEDINGS OF GOVERNMENT.

Jan 26/81

Dated. 13. June 1881

1882/70.