

Local & Munl. (1897) Department.

MISCELLANEOUS.

G.O., No. 1251 M.

DATED 21st May 1897.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Bubonic Plague Recording letter from the
Sanitary Commissioner submitting for information
copy of his letter to the President, District
Board, Coimbatore in reply to the latter's
remarks on the inspection notes
of the plague camp at Podanur.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Local & Munl. (1897) Department.

CURRENT No. 1975.

Sub. *Hy.*

Order No. 1257 M. 21.5.97.

Recorded.

S.P.

19/5/97

From

The Sanitary Commission,
for Madras.

No. 1060
S

Dated 13th May 1897.

Received 17 MAY 1897

Registered 17.5.97.

Enclosures *nil*.

Spare copies

Note

In the case of Palanur
we have approved the
isolation & cremation sheds,
which were at 8 yards
apart, being ~~not~~ placed
at a greater distance
from each other

S.P. 19/5/97

SUBJECT.

Forwarding for information of
Government copy of his letter to the
President District Board Coimbatore
offering his opinion with reference to
the President's remarks on his inspection
notes of the Plague station at Pala-
nur.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

No. 1060
S

OFFICE OF SANITARY COMMISSIONER,
Camp Street, Fort St. George, 13 May 1897.
LOCAL & MUNICIPAL DEPT.
CURRENT No. 1975 M

From

SURGEON LIEUT.-COL. W. G. KING, M.B., C.M., D.P.H.,

SANITARY COMMISSIONER FOR MADRAS,

To

THE

Secretary to Government-
Local & Municipal Dept.

Enclosure.

SIR,

With reference to G.O. No. 974 hi
dated 26 April 1897, Local and
Municipal, I have the honor to
forward for the information of
Government the accompanying
copy of a letter to the Pre-
sident District Board Coimba-
tor, in which the subject
therein mentioned is fully
treated.

I have the honor to be
Sir

Your most obedt. Servt.

W. G. King

Surgeon Lieut. Col.

Sanitary Commissioner

No. 1059
S

OFFICE OF SANITARY COMMISSIONER,
Camp Ennur 13 May 1897.
Fort St. George,

From

SURGEON LIEUT.-COL. W. G. KING, M.B., C.M., D.P.H.,

SANITARY COMMISSIONER FOR MADRAS,

To

THE

President
District Board
Mambalore.

Enclosure.

SIR,

With reference to your letter
No. ¹⁹⁵₅₃ dated 30 April 1897, I have the
honour to state that there can
exist no reason why an obser-
vation shed and an isolation
shed should be in any greater
proximity to each other than
would permit of the transfer
of a patient from the former to
the latter, without being put
to exertion of a type that would
prove injurious. The whole
arrangements as to staff and
supplies for the observation
camp should be distinct from
those for the isolation sheds.
The object to be subserved is
that a person should be re-
ceived into an observation shed,
and be subjected to no risk
of

of infection although himself
under suspicion.

2. The opinion of the older medical
observers of plague epidemics
was that the infection is eni-
-mently one that is air-borne,
and that risk diminished
rapidly with the distance from
the affected persons. In the
present day, theories as to spread
of disease being air borne are
regarded with suspicion, and,
personally, I may state that
I consider it is extremely unlikely
that bacilli detached from the
patient with his discharges
and that have come in con-
-tact with his bedding would
be air-borne otherwise ^{than for a} very short
distance, but, the medical pro-
-fession at the present moment
possesses no certain data on
the point, and whatever may
be the impressions of those work-
-ing in the present epidemic, they
cannot be regarded as likely
to be of any value until the
facts upon which they are
built are carefully compiled and
are

are subjected to professional
scrutiny. That it is essential
that more impressions shall
not be trusted to in such matters
I may state in proof, that it
was not long back that the
suggestion that small-pox in-
-fection could be air-borne for
a distance up to one mile would
have been laughed at - yet;
carefully worked out statistics
go to show that this is correct.
Whilst the matter is in doubt
then as to plague, I hold
that it is our duty to give the
benefit of that doubt to the
unfortunate person who, on
mere suspicion of being
affected with plague, is forcibly
restrained - not for his own
but the public benefit from
going on his journey, and is
thrust into a rough "observa-
-tion" shed which to all in-
-tents and purposes is for the
time being a jail. Personally,
I should regard a passenger cap-
-tured under these circum-
-stances and placed in a
hut within 8 yards of plague
patients

patients and their attendants
night and day as well justi-
fied in using what physical
force he possessed in preventing
himself being thus treated.
But whatever opinions may be
held as to distance requisite
to prevent this doubtful factor
of aerial infection there can be
none as to the possibility of
infective matter being carried
by clothing, nor of the fact that
faecal matter of infected persons
contains the plague bacilli
and can infect the soil. Now,
if these two facts be placed to-
gether and native habits and
difficultly as to discipline be
held in mind, it will be per-
ceived, that if the distances
between an isolation shed
and an observation shed be
such as to permit free mingling
of the respective staffs, that
persons retained in observation
sheds would be subjected to
unnecessary risks. Hence
either specially trustworthy
guards must surround iso-
lation sheds, or mechanical
obstructions

obstructions such as barbed
wire fencing, high walls etc.
must be trusted to to effect
full separation.

3. Taking the whole of the above
Circumstances into considera-
-tion, I hold that (1) there is
no prima facie reason why
observation sheds should be
closer to isolation sheds than
requisite in respect to safety
in transport of the sick. (2)
that with the object of keeping
apart the staffs, and preserving
the purity of the ground in the
vicinity of observation sheds,
the distance from isolation
sheds not be less than 300
yards - that being a distance
sufficient to prevent an inter-
-change of amenities with com-
fort and (3) that where ~~an~~
~~account of~~ absolute difficulty
exists as to obtaining sites apart with
in this minimum, definite
arrangements by means of
mechanical obstructions of an
infective nature or efficient
guards should be placed be-
tween the camps. This mode of
reasoning

Reasoning might well require
 modification within a city already
infected. but, it must be
 remembered that what is re-
 quired at the present moment
 in the Madras Presidency is
 the prevention of entry of the
 disease, and that a camp
 so arranged that persons
 brought under "observation"
 or their attendants are
 rendered liable to exposure
 to preventible risks, would
 prove simply an admirable
 plague breeding ground.

I have the honor to be
 Sir

Your most obedient
 Servant
 Surgeon Lt Col.
 Sanitary Commissioner

True copy

W. King
 Surgeon Lt Col.
 Sanitary Commr for Madras

75.2.1897

When given for copying _____
 When copied _____
 When examined _____
 When signed _____

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READ AGAIN G.O., No.
 189

DATED

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO G. No.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT A A A A A A A
 LETTER OF GOVERNMENT
 STATEMENT WITH DITTO
 PAPERS NOT FILED UP, BEING WANT FOR DESPATCH
 IN ORIGINAL.

N.B.—
 A = Copy in full.
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