

Local & Munl. (1898) Department

MISCELLANEOUS.

G.O., No. 1504 Pms ✓

DATED 5-12-98

[Despatch Abstract.]

Circulars relating to Plague.

Recording Proceedings of the Plague Commission ordering the printing of certain — both in English & the principal Vernaculars for circulation, and requesting the Collectors and the President, Municipal Commission, Madras to indent on the Suptt. Govt. Press, for the required number of copies.

BACK PAPERS.

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

FURTHER PAPERS.

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

Proceedings of the Plague Commissioner, MADRAS — 1898.



Recd. } 16 — 11 — } 1898.
Regd.

Enclosures -

Spare copies -

Proceedings, No. 652, 11th November 1898.

NOVEMBER.

Order of 5-12-98 No. 1504 P. 1898

Recorded

1.2 2/12/98

• Circulars relating to Plague.

Ordering the printing of certain — both in English and the principal vernaculars for circulation, and requesting Collectors and the President, Municipal Commission, Madras, to indent on the Superintendent, Government Press, for the required number of copies.

No. 652, 11TH NOVEMBER 1898.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLAGUE COMMISSIONER.

PROCEEDINGS—No. 652, dated 11th November 1898.

Three circulars relating to plague have been prepared in English and the principal vernacular languages * for general circulation among the people. One states briefly the plague rules and the policy of Government with regard to plague administration. This is intended for

* Tamil.
Telugu.
Canarese.

Malayalam.
Hindustani.

distribution chiefly among the village officers for their own information and guidance as well as for being explained to the villagers. Each village headman should be given two copies in all the districts in which plague cases have occurred or are likely to occur shortly, viz., Bellary, Kurnool, Anantapur, Cuddapah, North Arcot, Salem, Coimbatore, Nilgiris, Malabar, Canara and Chingleput. The second is a summary of the first and is intended for circulation among all persons who can read. A copy should be supplied to every house-holder in the districts bordering on Mysore and Hyderabad States. Copies of both the first and second circulars should also be freely distributed in the City of Madras. The third circular gives instructions to be observed before and after inoculation, and orders regarding its distribution have been issued in Proceedings No. 442, dated 27th October 1898.

2. All Collectors and the President, Municipal Commission, Madras, are requested to indent at once on the Superintendent, Government Press, for the required number of copies in English and the vernaculars. The Superintendent will keep in type the circular in all the languages and strike off and supply copies according to requirements.

Plague Commissioner.

To all Collectors (A—L).
„ the President, Municipal Commission, Madras.
„ the Superintendent, Government Press.
„ the Hon'ble M.R.Ry. P. Rajaratna Mudaliyar Avargal, Diwan Bahadur.
„ the Secretary to Government, Local and Municipal Department,
with copies of the circulars.

Exd. C. M. Thambuswamy

[Appendices.

APPENDIX I.

Circular to Villagers.

The public are aware that a most dangerous disease known as the bubonic plague appeared two years ago in Bombay and subsequently in Poona and carried off several thousands of the population. The disease has since broken out in Hyderabad, in Hubli (Dharwar) and in Bangalore and is now advancing towards the borders of this Presidency. Several imported cases have already occurred in the Madras, North Arcot, Anantapur and Salem districts. Its chief characteristics are fever attended with glandular swellings and a high rate of mortality. High fever is ushered in with shivering and, after two or three days of continuous fever, glandular swellings may appear in the groins of the leg, arm-pits or neck, or in all the three places. If the disease continues, the patient may vomit blood and blood may also be discharged from the nose, the mouth, the bowels and mixed with urine. The swellings may become gangrenous and bleeding may occur from them; death may be ushered in by convulsions, delirium, insensibility, &c.

2. The disease is more dangerous than cholera and is very infectious. Once it takes root, it will be difficult to eradicate it. The best efforts of Government have accordingly been directed for some months past towards stopping, by every possible means, its advance into this Presidency. With this object, a careful examination of all passengers has been ordered to be made at selected stations on all the railways and along the main roads leading into the Presidency, and camps have also been formed for detaining and treating passengers suspected to be suffering from symptoms of plague.

3. All persons are allowed to pass freely as in ordinary times except—

- (a) those suspected of plague,
- (b) those suspected of arriving from an infected locality.

(a) Persons suspected of plague, with their families and attendants, are required to be detained at the frontier inspection stations for isolation and disinfection, until it is deemed safe to release them with passports.

(b) Persons suspected arriving from an infected area are examined at the frontier inspection stations and allowed to proceed on their journey on the following conditions:—

(1) At road frontier stations, they are provided with passports binding them to present themselves for daily inspection for the next ten days before the local authority, i.e., the local medical officer or police station-house officer or village headman in any village where they may be, information of the issue of the passport being sent promptly by the officer in charge to the local authority of the place of destination.

(2) At railway frontier inspection stations, their tickets are punched with a special mark, if they have not been so marked before, and on arriving at the railway station where they intend to leave the train, they are furnished with passports by the station master or other officer appointed for the purpose, and intimation of the fact is sent to the local authority at the place of final destination.

4. Before persons arriving from an infected area are permitted to proceed on their journeys under passports as stated above, they may be disinfected if the Collector so orders. This is merely a process of cleaning the person and his clothing and will be resorted to only when necessary.

5. Persons coming from an infected area who appear to be likely to sicken to plague or spread infection of plague, whether by reason of their appearance, the dirty condition of their clothes, or the fact that they are travelling in gangs, or who belong to classes which are likely to disseminate the disease, or who seem likely not to be easily traced on arrival at their destination, or who are not to be depended upon to give information should plague occur among them after arrival at their destination, or for any other similar reason, may also be similarly detained under the special orders of the Collector.

6. The necessity for detaining persons for observation, or for requiring them to present themselves daily for inspection for ten days is due to the fact that medical officers have laid down ten days as the limit of safety, that is to say, infection is possible for ten days after a person leaves an infected area.

7. All taluks situated on the borders of the Bombay Presidency and Hyderabad territory and also those adjoining the Bangalore district have been divided into convenient circles, and placed in charge of special plague inspectors and assistant inspectors whose duty it is to constantly and systematically patrol their circles in order to give the earliest possible information of a case of plague so that immediate action may be taken. They are required to report any pressing sanitary need to the District Medical and Sanitary Officer, and to check passports or passes in the case of persons arriving from an infected locality. Persons arriving without a passport or pass or who may be found to have broken its conditions may be detained by the plague inspector or any member of his staff and sent to the nearest medical officer for detention until he (the medical officer) is satisfied that there is no danger of such persons spreading infection.

Inspectors and assistant inspectors are also required to keep a record of all persons suffering from continuous fever for more than twelve hours and to arrange with the village headmen to have such persons inspected twice daily in view to find out if the case turns out to be one of plague.

8. The measures indicated above are absolutely necessary for protecting the people of the Presidency against the danger that is threatening them on all sides. These measures will no doubt entail a certain amount of hardship and inconvenience to persons going from place to place on business or pleasure, but considerations of individuals must give way to considerations for the good of the people at large. It is well known that on occasions of the outbreak of cholera or small-pox the people very often voluntarily enforce a sort of quarantine against persons coming from villages infected with those diseases, and it needs no argument to convince them that in dealing with a disease so much more infectious and dangerous as is the plague which is threatening this Presidency, similar precautionary measures should be enforced with all possible rigour. The leading men of every village should therefore make it their duty to watch all strangers coming into their village and give immediate information to the village munsif or to the nearest station-house officer, if they find reasons to suspect that the strangers have come from plague-infected tracts or are suffering from severe fever or symptoms of plague. Unless they willingly and cordially co-operate with the officers appointed for the duty and give prompt intimation of all suspicious cases coming to their knowledge, the best efforts of Government towards arresting this dreadful disease will become practically of no avail.

9. There are also certain sanitary precautions which the people should carefully observe on occasions like the present, if not at all times. Many diseases of the human body are due to filth, foul air, bad food, bad water, &c. These and other insanitary conditions probably pre-dispose to attack and foster the plague germ.

A.—Habitations.

- (1) Every house should be thoroughly cleaned, that is, all manure, dirty water, washings of cattle stalls and collection of dirt of any description must be completely removed.
- (2) Where the earth remains damp and foul after such removal, it should be dug up till dry and clean earth is reached.
- (3) The old earth should be taken from the town and may be used as manure for the fields; new earth from a clean place should be laid down.
- (4) The interior and exterior of houses should be white-washed. If persons cannot afford to do the outside, the inside at least should be white-washed.
- (5) Bundles of clothing and other materials hanging from the beams or occupying in any other way the rooms in which persons sleep should be removed.
- (6) Doors and windows should at all possible hours be left open so that free ventilation be obtained.
- (7) If private latrines are used, they must be kept free from faecal matter by removal at least twice daily.
- (8) The drains leading from houses should be cleansed twice daily.
- (9) Cess-pools and pits for receipt of urine of cattle should be emptied daily.

B.—Person.

(1) The body and clothing should be kept scrupulously clean. If delicate, persons should use warm, not cold, baths.

(2) The food should be plain, nourishing, and of good quality.

(3) All vegetables or leaves or fruits, likely to cause diarrhoea, should be abandoned.

(4) All forms of drinking to excess, debauchery, late hours and exposure to wet and cold should be avoided.

(5) Cold cooked food should never be used. Care should be taken not to allow flies to settle upon food. Vegetables and leaves should never be eaten otherwise than after cooking. Before being cooked, they should be well washed in water that has been purified by boiling. Salt should be freely used with the diet; but, on the other hand, it must not be used in such unusual amounts as to excite uneasiness or looseness of the bowels.

(6) An inferior quality of water should not be kept in the house; only the cleanest available should be employed.

(7) Water for drinking purposes and for washing the mouth or eating and drinking vessels, and milk should be boiled before use.

(8) Persons with cuts or abrasions on their hands, feet or other exposed parts of the body should avoid attendance on plague patients; but if attendance is essential, the wounded parts should be covered and, on occasions of temporary withdrawals from attendance, the parts should be washed with disinfectants, which can be obtained from the sanitary staff on application.

10. It has been found from experience in other provinces that rats are a dangerous means of conveying infection. Every effort should therefore be made to destroy them in time.

11. Large sums of money have already been expended in carrying out Government's plague preventive measures, and if, in spite of all these precautions, the plague should unfortunately make its appearance in this presidency, the public may rest assured that the Government is fully prepared to meet it and prevent it at all cost from assuming an epidemic form. Should the disease unfortunately break out, it will be necessary to introduce an efficient system of house-to-house inspection in order promptly to detect all real or suspected cases; to segregate the sick and treat them in hospitals specially erected for the purpose; to cause evacuation of infected houses and localities, if need be; and to enforce general sanitary precautions, such as extensive cleansing of dwellings, freer admission of light and air, destruction or modification of insanitary buildings, improvement of drainage and conservancy, abatement of overcrowding, opening out of crowded localities.

12. Segregation of the plague-stricken and of the persons who have been in immediate contact with them is a fundamental precaution which is essential to the successful issue of any operations against the disease. It is the only effective means of preventing the spread of the infection and will be carried out with the strictest regard to the habits, feelings and prejudices of the different classes of the community. Those who may desire it will be permitted, and aided, to erect their own hospitals and their own segregation huts, in sites shown to them or selected by them and approved by the authorities. Friends and relations will be allowed to visit the patients and, if desired, to reside near them. They can have their own food and can bring their own doctors. Every arrangement will be made to respect the privacy of women. No particular mode of treatment will be forced upon any one, and women will, under no circumstances, be required to be examined by men. In cases where infected houses or localities are evacuated the inmates will be temporarily accommodated in some convenient place, and during their absence, their houses and such of their property as may be left behind will be taken care of by Government, and adequate compensation will be paid to poor people for articles destroyed by the sanitary authorities.

13. It may be noted here that in two districts of the North-West Provinces where the plague existed for a long time in an endemic form, the villagers learnt by bitter experience that evacuation of the plague-infected locality was their best chance

of escape, and it soon became a common practice with them to vacate the village immediately the plague appeared, and to camp on the hillsides or other safe places. It is desirable that each class or caste of persons in towns in this Presidency should arrange beforehand with the district authorities for sites for hospitals and segregation camps, and organise measures at once to keep every thing ready for erecting them without delay when necessity arises. Every assistance will be given them by the officers of Government.

14. Should plague break out in any village or town, passes will be freely granted by the plague authority or other officer authorised by the Collector to the people to pursue their usual occupations without hindrance. General passes will be given to agriculturists and others having occasion to make daily and frequent journeys by road, rail or boat from an infected area. Where it is necessary for the whole family to go and work in the fields, a single pass may be given for the family which may not be revoked, even should a case of plague occur in the family of the pass-holder. There must, however, be a separate pass for each person making a railway journey under a general pass. The passes will not cover residence outside of the infected area and will not cover journeys by rail unless that is expressly stated on them. Special passes will be freely given to persons who may wish to leave the infected area and reside elsewhere and may be granted for households, provided that the name and description of each person covered by the pass is entered therein. Before, however, these special passes are given, the plague authority will satisfy himself that no case of plague has occurred in the house of the applicant or in any adjacent house or among any of his relations or associates and may also require the disinfection of all clothes and other articles to be taken away.

15. As already stated, the sole object of Government is to prevent the importation of plague into the Presidency and promptly to check its spread and stamp it out, should it nevertheless appear. That object can only be fully attained if the people themselves, for whose benefit the regulations have been framed, loyally accept them and support the action of the authorities. They should not give way to unnecessary alarm nor allow themselves to be misled by false rumours. They should freely and promptly bring to notice of the taluk officers and others appointed for the special duty all cases in which they may be subjected to unnecessary inconvenience and annoyance.

16. There is one other point to which it is necessary to draw their special attention. They are aware from long experience that persons who have been vaccinated are less liable to attacks of small-pox than those who have not been vaccinated. Experiments made in Bombay, Poona, Calcutta and other places have also shown that persons inoculated with properly prepared plague serum, such as has been found by Mr. Haffkine, are less liable to attacks of plague than those not so inoculated. Not only is the percentage of attacks reduced but the rate of mortality is materially lessened. Government has, however, no intention to force the people to subject themselves to this inoculation. It will be left entirely to them to adopt the system or not. They will be assured, however, that segregation will not be enforced in the case of persons who voluntarily allow themselves to be inoculated.

APPENDIX.

A.—Rules for Disinfection of Plague-infected Houses.

- I. Sprinkle 1:1000 perchloride of mercury solution on the floor and in all corners to "lay" the dust. No brushing of walls or floor should on any account be permitted. This is a most dangerous proceeding and likely to spread infection.
- II. Open all windows and doors and allow free ventilation.
- III. Carefully sweep up all dust and rubbish, remove out of doors and burn. Also burn all bedding and clothes of the patient and all torn and dirty rags, sacking, &c., lying about. This must be done out of doors.
- IV. Steep all other clothing, bedding, sacking, bags, &c., whether in use at the time or not in 1:1000 perchloride of mercury solution for half an hour, thoroughly soaking all parts of each article. Next place them in a chattyful of water which is to be boiled for half an hour. Valuable articles which can neither be boiled nor disinfected should be exposed to the sun for at least eight hours.
- V. Carefully flush (pump) 1:1000 perchloride of mercury solution in all parts of the rooms in the affected house, beginning above at the rafters and proceeding downwards to the floor.

Especially flush out all crevices, clefts, niches, corners, bathing places, cooking places and latrines. The floor must be thoroughly soaked and especially at its junction with the walls. The door and lintels must be carefully mopped or flushed and also all boxes, almirahs, &c., in the room. The furniture should be disinfected first, then taken outside and placed in the sun to dry, and then the room disinfected. After being flooded with mercury solution, the floor, if of earth, should be dug up up to a depth of 4 inches and burnt by the kiln method.

VI. Thoroughly fill all gurrals, cooking pots and pans, lotahs, &c., with boiling water and keep at the boil for half an hour, or with a weak solution of permanganate of potassium and leave for one and half hours. Then pour out and wash with ordinary water.

VII. All useless articles must be burnt. All rubbish burnt, whether within or without the affected house; the compound thoroughly cleaned up and the drains and latrines flushed out with water first and then washed with 1:1000 perchloride of mercury solution.

VIII. The houses directly adjoining must be hot lime-washed with chloride of lime at once and thoroughly cleaned.

IX. The affected house is not to be occupied for a week. On the day following the disinfection by perchloride of mercury, the outside and inside of the affected house including the floor and the ceiling must be hot lime-washed.

X. In cases where houses have no free ventilation, i.e., at least two small windows and one big door for each room, windows and other ventilation holes must be made by knocking holes in the walls, removing broad stripes of tiles (not rafters) from the roof or taking off and burning the thatch of the roof.

N.B.—All persons engaged in disinfection work are to wear shoes covering the upper parts of their feet and to wash their hands and feet in 1:1000 perchloride of mercury solution on completion of their work and disinfect their clothes and persons in carbolic acid or phenyle solution.

B.—Directions for preparing solutions of Disinfectants.

I. Perchloride of mercury is the best chemical disinfectant known and should always be used. Reliable perchloride can be obtained from the Medical Stores, Madras.

II. It is best to issue this disinfectant to coolies as a solution, since it is very poisonous. The solution can be prepared as follows:—

Take a clean one-gallon bottle. Place half pound of perchloride of mercury and one pound of hydrochloric acid which increases its efficacy and half fill the bottle with water. Shake thoroughly and then gradually add repeated quantities of water until all is dissolved. A little common salt or ammonium chloride helps to dissolve the solution.

(This solution can readily be prepared if the materials are pure. If a large portion of the perchloride of mercury remains undissolved, it is probably very impure and practically useless.)

Colour the solution with a pinch of red ink powder to prevent any one drinking it and "label" "Poison."

Six ounces of this solution in an ordinary wooden bucketful of water (of nearly 20 pints capacity) gives a reliable solution of perchloride of mercury, of practically 1:1000.

III. Phenyle should be served out free. It is fairly cheap and harmless to animals. It must be diluted in the proportion of 24 lbs. of phenyle to 96 gallons of water.

IV. Potassium permanganate requires to be powdered to ensure rapid and complete solution. Half an ounce to an ordinary pailful of water will serve as a reliable disinfectant. When it loses its purple colour and turns brown, it is useless, having been decomposed. It is non-poisonous and is especially useful for purifying drinking-water and for other domestic purposes.

V. Hot water.—An easy and simple method of disinfection is readily at hand in most situations. Water heated to 127° F or above appears to destroy the vitality of the plague bacillus. This temperature can be borne by the hand for a few minutes only. Boiling water will therefore certainly destroy the bacillus. Floors and walls of houses, fixtures and furniture could be disinfected by pouring boiling water all over the surface.

VI. Chloride of lime possesses the merits of cheapness and great efficiency. It is not dangerous in any marked degree, to animal life. Quicklime is less efficacious. It is harmless and is readily obtained in most parts of the country. Carbolic acid is not recommended, as it is a weak germicide, its efficient strength being but 1 in 50.

Plague.

THERE appears to be considerable misapprehension amongst the ignorant masses regarding the measures taken by Government for the prevention and suppression of the plague and the orders issued regarding anti-plague-inoculation. The Government has no intention of forcing the people to subject themselves to inoculation. They will be free to get themselves inoculated or not as they please. Those who voluntarily allow themselves to be inoculated will not be subjected to any observation and will not be detained at any inspecting station unless they are attacked with the plague. The experiences gained in other provinces show that about 90 per cent. of the persons inoculated do not get the disease, and among the few that may be attacked the mortality is very small. Some two thousand persons in the town of Madras and several in and near Guntakal, in Bellary, in Ootacamund and in other places have been inoculated within the past few months and there has not been a single casualty amongst them. It is well known that persons who have been vaccinated are less liable to the attack of small-pox than those who have not been. Similarly, experience in Bombay, Poona, Hubli, and other places shows that persons inoculated with plague serum are less liable to the attacks of plague than those not so inoculated. Even if 50 per cent. of the persons inoculated escape the attack, the matter is well worthy of consideration. As already stated, however, inoculation will not be forced upon any one.

2. As regards the preventive measures adopted by Government there can be no question that, but for them, the plague would have broken out long ago in this Presidency and carried off several thousands of its inhabitants. This disease is so infectious and dangerous that a careful examination at selected centres, and their detention when need be, of all passengers coming from infected areas or suspected of suffering from symptoms of plague, is absolutely necessary for preventing the spread of the infection. If in spite of all these precautions the disease should unfortunately break out, it will be necessary to make house-to-house inspection in order promptly to detect all real or suspected cases and segregate the sick. It would be well if the people themselves undertake this. Unless the sick persons and those in immediate contact with them are promptly removed and segregated, the disease will spread from house-to-house and from village-to-village like a conflagration and the entire population will soon become a prey to it. It is incumbent, therefore, on the Government to do all in its power to save the masses from the ravages of this dreadful disease, and in carrying out the necessary measures to this end, it is inevitable that considerations for individuals must give way to considerations of the public at large. The measures, however, will be carried out with the strictest regard to the habits, feelings, and prejudices of the different classes of the community. Those who may desire it will be permitted and aided to erect their own segregation huts in sites selected by them and approved by the authorities. Half the cost will be paid by Government. Friends and relatives will be allowed to visit the patients and, if desired, to reside near them. They can have their own food and can bring their own doctors. No particular mode of treatment will be forced upon any one, and women will under no circumstances be required to be examined by males. In cases where infected houses are evacuated, the inmates will be temporarily accommodated in some convenient place, and during their absence their house and such of the property as may be left behind will be taken care of by Government, and adequate compensation will be paid to poor people for articles destroyed by the sanitary authorities. The Government has no wish whatever to interfere in any way with the burning or burial of the dead in accordance with the custom of each caste. Where bodies are buried they should be buried at least six feet below the surface.

3. A circular explaining briefly the nature and objects of the various rules framed by Government for combating with this disease has been sent to all village officers, and the public are requested to obtain copies of them, study them carefully and loyally support the action of Government. They should act like sensible men and should not allow themselves to be led away by all sorts of absurd and false rumours. If they have any grievances, they should represent them to the officers of Government and abide by their orders.

Inoculation.

Persons desirous of being inoculated—

- (1) May take an oil-bath a day or two before;
- (2) if subject to constipation, it is as well to take a dose of a purgative or a laxative a few days beforehand;
- (3) after inoculation, the diet should be simple and light; milk, conjee, sago, coffee, soda water, &c., might be taken freely with advantage;
- (4) people sometimes suffer from faintness and giddiness after operation; this need cause no anxiety. The best remedy is to sit in a chair and stoop forward with the head between the knees. Soda water or strong coffee mixed with a little milk might be taken;
- (5) if the arm inoculated gives much pain, bran or any other dry fomentation may be used and the arm should be supported by sling;
- (6) inoculated persons should avoid exposing themselves until the fever entirely subsides; pain in the arm may continue for some days, but this need not prevent the ordinary work;
- (7) for three or four days, even ordinary bath should be avoided; or if it is absolutely necessary, a sponge-bath should be taken in a closed room so that the person may not catch a chill; cold baths should be avoided;
- (8) oil-bath should not be taken for eight or ten days after inoculation;
- (9) no treatment is necessary for the fever which will subside by itself in two or three days. Head-ache, if present, may be treated by external application of menthol or ice or cold lotions, such as vinegar and water. Should, however, the fever rise high, the inoculated person would do well to seek the advice of a competent medical officer or send intimation to the nearest dispensary and not trust to quacks;
- (10) sickness and nausea, when present, are best treated by a little iced soda water or soda water and milk mixed;
- (11) sexual abstinence should be observed at least for two or three weeks;
- (12) females will find it convenient to be inoculated a week or ten days before menses; they may be operated on one week after the period;
- (13) persons with a weak heart or lungs and persons subject to hysterics, heart disease or nervous disability should get themselves carefully examined by a medical officer before they subject themselves to inoculation.

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