

Local & Munl. (1899) Department.

MISCELLANEOUS.

G.O., No. 1582 X83 M.

DATED 26-10-99

[Despatch Abstract.]

Vital Statistics. Requesting the municipal Commissioners of Madras to report on the desirability of adopting the suggestions of the Sanitary Committee for improving the system of the death registration in the city & informing the Govt. of India that the final decision which may be arrived at on the question will be duly communicated to that Govt.

Local & Munl. (1897) Department.

The Govt. of India
Home Department

Referred to the Municipal Commissioners
of Madras for remarks which should
be submitted through the Sanitary Com-
missioner.

No 1910

Dated 13-6-99

Received 21-6-99

Registered 22-6-77

Enclosures *ml*

Spare copies

SUBJECT.

Pointing out with remarks
in reference to the explanation
that the variation from the
normal of the Madras civil
mortality statement was
probably due to fever deaths
being returned under the
head of "all other causes,"
need for some improvement in
the system? death registration
in Madras and giving for information
two important clauses on the subject
contained in the Calcutta Manual be
now under consideration.

H.B. in appt. Dec 7.7.29

Managers Circulate
PM 10.29.

17/83 ✓
 Nos 1652 + 2536m/99
 Misc No. 1583 ^{mis} 26-10-99
 ordg *mt*

The attention of the Municipal Commissioners is drawn to the suggestions made by the Sanitary Commissioner in paras. 2 and 7 of his letter read above and they are requested to consider and report on the desirability of adopting the measures therein referred to, in view to improving the system of death registration in the City, which the Govt. considers, needs modification.

2. The following letter will be addressed to the Govt. of India:-

Letter No 1583 ^{mis} 26-10-99

To The Secretary to the Govt. of India
 Home Department.
 Sr. *mt* 25.10.99

In reply to your letter No. 1910, Sanitary dated 13th June 99, enquiring whether in the opinion of this Government the incident therein referred to indicates a need for some improvement in the system of death registration now in force in the City of Madras and drawing attention to Clauses on the subject of mortality registration

BACK PAPER

G.O.	No.	Department.
<i>10</i>	<i>570-71</i>	<i>Sanitary</i>

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

To The President, Municipal Comm^y Madras
 " Sanitary Commission.
mt 25.10.99

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 2536/99

registration in the Calcutta Municipal Bill now under Consideration which have no counterpart in Madras City Municipal Act. I am directed to forward for the information of Mr. C. C. C. the Governor General in Council a copy of the Proceedings of this Government No. 1583 of this date and to state that the final decision which may be arrived at by the Government on the question of improving death registration in the City, will be duly communicated to the Govt. of India.

I have etc

V.A. 16/10/99
mt 21.10.99
 Supd. 27/10/99

No. 1910

From

A. H. L. Fraser, Esq., C.S.I.,

B

LOCAL & MUNICIPAL

Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

To 1652/11

The Secretary to the Government of Madras,

Local and Municipal Department.

Home Department.

(Sanitary)



Simla, the 13th June 1899.

Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 571, dated the 27th April last and enclosures, explaining that the variation from the normal of the Madras City mortality statement pointed out in my letter of the 4th March last was probably due to fever deaths being returned under the head of "all other causes" in the fear lest they should be treated as possible cases of plague.

2. This explanation appears to the Government of India to indicate that the system of death registration in the city of Madras is defective, and that it would not enable the existence of an epidemic to be discovered in its early stages when measures of prevention might be effective in controlling it. In a Maritime City this is a matter of great importance and I am to inquire whether in the opinion of the Government of Madras the present incident indicates a need for some improvement in the system of death registration now in force in the City.

3. I am at the same time to state for the information of the Governor in Council that the Calcutta Municipal Bill which is now under consideration contains two important clauses on the subject of mortality registration which have no counterpart in the Madras City Municipal Act.

These

These are:-

- (a) medical attendants are required to submit a certificate of the cause of death of their patients; and
(b) keepers of burning and burial grounds, to which sub-registrars are not appointed, may not permit cremation or burial unless the corpse is accompanied by a certificate in the prescribed form (which includes a statement of the cause of death), signed by a registrar, sub-registrar or medical officer.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

Attatrasu

Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

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THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Local & Munl. (1899) Department.

CURRENT No.

From
THE PRESIDENT,
Municipal Commission,
Madras.

Order

G. No. 275

Dated 23rd August 1899

Received

Registered

Enclosures Two,

Spare copies

SUBJECT.

Forwarding, with reference to Madras
Memorandum No: 718 of 6th July 1899 on current
No: 1652 hi, an extract from the
proceedings of an adjourned general
meeting of the Commissioners, regarding
the proposed improvement in the
registration of births & deaths
pending the experience from
Calcutta Municipality since
last meeting.

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2536/m/99-

BACK PAPERS

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Encl(1) to G. No. 275

7

Extract referred to.

Endorsement No.718 dated 6th July 1899 on Current No. 1652 M. Local and Municipal Department, on the despatch from Government of India suggesting improvement in the system of death Registration in the City of Madras.

The amendment proposed by M.R.Ry G. Subramania Iyer Avargal and seconded by Mir Muzheruddin Sahib Bahadur at the Meeting held on 31st July 1899, namely:-

"That to secure the more accurate registration of death a certificate signed by a Medical attendant, a Municipal Commissioner or by any other respectable gentleman resident in the street or neighbourhood should be furnished within 48 hours after cremation or burial of the corpse",

was put to the meeting and lost.

Then the amendment proposed, at the same meeting, by M.R.Ry W.S. Venkataramanjulu Naidu Garu and seconded by M.R.Ry V. Masilamany Pillay Avargal, namely:-

"As the Commissioners think that the proposed change in the registration is unsuited to the condition prevailing in Madras that the subject be deferred pending the experience the Calcutta Municipality might gain in the matter",

was put to the Meeting and carried.

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MUNICIPALITY OF MADRAS.

General Department,

Madras, 23rd August 1899.

G. No. 275

From

R.E. Ellis Esq., M.Inst.C.E.,
~~THE HON'BLE LIERT-COR. SIR GEORGE MOORE, KT., C.I.E.~~
Ag. President, Municipal Commission.

To

The Secretary to Government,
Local and Municipal Department,
Fort Saint George.

Thro'
Sir,

The Sanitary Commissioner for Madras.

Enclosures

2

With reference to your endorsement No. 713, dated
6th July 1899, on Current No. 1652 M (herewith returned),
I have the honor to forward the enclosed extract from the
Proceedings of an Adjourned General Meeting of the Commis-
-sioners held on 14th August 1899.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

R.E. Ellis.

Ag. President, Munl. Commn.

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2536/m/99-

Local & Munl. (1899) Department.

CURRENT No. 2536 m

From

The Sanitary Commissioner
for Madras.

Order

No. $\frac{2441}{5}$

Dated 25th September 1899.

Received 26 SEP 1899

Registered —

Enclosures Four.

Spare copies. nil

SUBJECT.

Forwarding with his remarks
letter from the President, Muni-
cipal Commission, Madras, offer-
ing his opinion on the Govt. of
India's letter enquiring whether the
~~present~~ system of Registration of
Deaths indicates a need for
some improvement ^{on the} ~~than~~ one now
in force in the city of Madras.

2536/m/99

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
No	570-71	hul	27-4-99
	18	hul	8-7-95

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Office of Sanitary Commissioner,

Madras, 25th September 1899.

NO. 2441
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From

Lieut-Col: W.G.King, C.I.E., M.B., C.M., D.P.H., I.M.S.

Sanitary Commissioner for Madras,

TO

GERRARD N. 2536 M

The Secretary to Government,

Local and Municipal Department.

Sir,

With reference to Endorsement NO. 718 dated 6th July 1899, I have the honour to state that it is probable the number of deaths is reported with fair accuracy in the City of Madras-owing to the fact that all burning and burial grounds are licensed and possess guards. Where persons have reports, these guards provide neglected to make information upon which the Municipality can proceed to prosecute. As far as I understand such prosecutions for failure are rare, and more reliance is placed upon deaths being discovered by the Municipality by such means than by insisting on the provision that persons responsible shall themselves make reports-a fact pointed out in my Inspection Notes on Madras City dated 17th November 1894.

2. It seems to me that there is no good ground why proposal (b) contained in Government of India's letter para 3 should not be brought into force. Under Section 399 of the City of Madras Municipal Act, it is demanded that a death shall be

reported

reported within twenty-four hours. There is no reason connected with caste or religion why, before proceeding to the burial or burning ground, this registration of death should not be accomplished by one or other of the persons mentioned in that Section. A certificate from the Registrar that the death had been duly registered, would form the necessary authority for the disposal of the corpse. The certificate would be given solely by the authorized Registrar.

3. Such a ruling ought to commend itself to the public as a necessary protection against murder, even if it did not as a protection against infectious diseases. It would aid the numerical strictness of registration, but it certainly would not aid the correctness of nomenclature of diseases causing death—it being obvious that the Registrar would still have to depend upon information supplied by the public that made false declaration so freely during the incident mentioned. The more frequent use of Section 402, which deals with ~~for the~~ giving of false information as to the cause of death to a Registrar, ought to be possible, and would form a useful check.

4. To secure correct nomenclature, the proposal (a) in the paragraph just quoted must be considered. It must at once be evident that the term "medical attendant" as applied to the town of Madras would cover vydeens, barbers, hakeems, and qualified medical men ranging from Hospital Assistants to those holding British registrable qualifications and degrees.

Certainly

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Certainly, no approach to accuracy could be secured by requiring the average vydeen to give certificates. Statements to the effect that the patient died of "too much heat", "too much bile", or "too much wind" in the body would not materially aid the classification of diseases. Hence, this demand can be applicable only to the class that could yield information of utility. This would necessitate the introduction of an Act for the Registration of qualified medical practitioners. Such an Act would involve the formation of a Medical Council to advise as to registration and removal from the Register. The natural sequel of this Act would be that none but qualified registered practitioners would be allowed to give certificates of death, that would have the same validity as the authorized Registrar in permitting disposal of the corpses.

5. But it must be remembered the bulk of the population are at this period attended by vydeens and hakims. This consideration some years back made me suggest to Government that, whilst it would be impossible to apply an universal rule affecting a population employing largely indigenous medical aid, by taking advantage of the presence of qualified medical men, an advance would be secured by using in each register office double forms, in such towns as might be deemed fit for such arrangement, by reason of the presence of a certain number of practising qualified medical men. In this way,

correctly

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correctly diagnosed diseases would find a place in registration statistics. They would bear but a small ratio to the total, but they would, in the course of years, be ever added to by increasing increments. No extra trouble would devolve upon the public, and very little upon the Registrar. The total of deaths would necessarily be unaffected, but they would be divided into two great classes—medically diagnosed, and not medically diagnosed, cases. In Calcutta and Bombay, it is possible the number of duly qualified medical practitioners is so great as to influence the total result of registration without attempting such distinction in classification of statistics, but this is certainly not the case in Madras.

6. Whilst therefore I think suggestion (b) should be introduced without delay and ought to be of advantage, it seems to me before suggestion (a) can be of any use, it would be necessary to pass a Medical Registration Act—taking care not to forbid the practice of ^{un}qualified practitioners—thus excluding vydeens and hakims—but to arrive at the desired end by demanding that all practitioners using designations that bespeak a qualification by a recognized European or Indian school or University, shall be registered; that such registered practitioners shall give, without fee, certificates of death in case they have medically attended on demand by the Registrar, or by the person responsible under Section 399 City of Madras Municipal Act, or 247 (2) of the District Municipal

* This is enforced in Great Britain. *

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Act. Certain legal privileges could easily be woven into such an Act that would make this condition acceptable to Medical practitioners. I consider the adoption of this course desirable, but not essential at the present stage of development.

7. An alternative safeguard however offers itself, namely, the compulsory notification of infectious diseases as a part of Municipal law, irrespective of the applicability of Regulations under the Epidemic Diseases Act. A clause to this extent might well ^{make} ~~include~~ the indefinite term "medical attendant", applicable alike to qualified and unqualified practitioners. It would be no matter what class of education the medical attendant possessed—it would always suffice to enable him to understand such disease as cholera, small-pox, measles, and plague. At any rate, no excuse need be taken for not recognizing such cases, after symptoms had been publicly notified by the Municipality.

8. Pending, therefore, the possibility of putting into effect the scheme mentioned in para 5, I consider it would be advisable for the proposal mentioned in the ^{Second} ~~First~~ and ~~Seventh~~ ^{last} paragraph of this letter be put in force in the City of Madras.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your Most Obedient Servant,

W. B. M. S.
Lieut-Colonel, I.M.S.,
Sanitary Commissioner for Madras.

A = Copy in full.
B = Not to be copied.
P = Copy abstract only.
Q = Copy heading only.

Act.