

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLAGUE COMMISSIONER.

(1899)

MISCELLANEOUS.

No. 832

Dated 24/3/99

Despatched 27-3-99

Indexed *HS*
263-99

[Despatch Abstract.]

Inspection Note.

Communicating with remarks, to the
CMr of N. District, The Sanitary Commis-
sioner's — on the towns of Walajpet,
Tirupattur, Ramipet &c.

BACK PAPERS.

No.	Date.	No.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

No.	Date.	No.	Date.
4684	25-4-89		
4893	25-4-89		
	15-5-89		

Plague - Urgent. Plague Commissioner, Madras. ~~Local & Munl.~~ (1899) Department.

For orders.

CURRENT No. 3155

There seems no reason why the S.C. should not be on the spot at once to advise what should be done instead of proceeding there at a later stage and finding fault with what has been done.

From

The Sanitary Commissioner for Madras.

No. 848/s.

Dated 14th March 1899.

Received

Registered

Enclosures

Spare copies.

SUBJECT.

Forwarding his Inspection Notes on the towns of Walajapet, Tirupati, Ranipet & Co., North Arcot District, for information.

2. Boots & shoes provided for ladies at Ranipet, & the 112 be disinfectant when they go off work. I cannot in fact in the use of Chinese boots; in fact hands they are of the best, & the work must be done by well as disinfectant as will allow 3. With some exception it is not possible to force as sanitary precautions in every case.

4. (Para 5) The Special Plague Officer for the district does not include Walajapet.

5. (Para 9) Arrangements for the disinfection of the town of Walajapet by the local authorities for the purpose of the Special Plague Officer for the district for his duties.

To the Commissioner of the North Arcot District.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

[500-5-11-98.]

PLAGUE.

No. 848
5

From

Lieut.-Colonel W. G. King, M.B., C.M., D.P.H.,

Sanitary Commissioner for Madras,

To

The
Plague Commissioner,
Madras.

Enclosure. /.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward
herewith my Inspection Notes
of Tirupathi, Wallajahmugger,
Ranipet & for your information.
Some time, a copy has also
been sent to the Collector, North
Arcot.

Thank you

Yr. Lr

Your most obedient
Servant

W. King

Lt. Col. I. M. S.

San. Comr. Madras.

Plague preventive measures in the North Arcot District.

up to 4th March 1899.

Walaiajpet Municipality. 51* cases of plague have occurred here up to date. Under G.O.NO.1985 M dated 18th November 1896, the minimum staff in this Municipality employed on plague purposes should be 1 Divisional Inspector, 1 orderly, 4 circle Inspectors, 16 toties and 16 peons, in addition to the ordinary staff of the Municipality. The full extra staff however, consists of 4 Municipal circle Inspectors, 1 Divisional Inspector, 4 toties and no peons.

2. The ordinary Municipal staff has been decreased by removing the only trained Sanitary Inspector, and placing him under the Plague Officer - leaving the ordinary care of the town to two maistries or peons. There is a Plague Hospital provided to which the inhabitants have been invited to resort. Having declined the invitation, they are treated by "home segregation". The guard per house consists of one policeman. Where, as frequently is the case, there is a back exit, it is guarded by a "special cooly", on annas four per day; there is no cooly provided for guarding the side walls of backyards of houses. In the most recent case, on passing through the house to the back, not even a watchman on annas four was to be found.

3. Fourteen coolies are engaged for disinfection work. Beyond requiring them to wash their hands and feet before going home, no precaution is taken with respect to them. They are provided with sandals instead of shoes. Only three of these are inoculated. On leaving work, they proceed to their own houses, without any precautions as to clothing or their persons. No special clothing is provided for their use. On a case being discovered, disinfection of the house is at once commenced, and an opening is made in the roof. Perchloride of mercury solution is distributed from "lotahs" dipped by hand, on the plea that Chinese pumps are out of order. The system

system is dangerous to the Coolies and sanitarily ineffective. A reserve of pumps, and timely repairs, ought to prevent such occurrences. No precautions are taken as to subsequent collection of rubbish, or of clothing during the person's illness.

4 In Ranipett and Pung~~ur~~ where ²⁶ and ²⁰ cases of plague respectively, have occurred, the same system of guarding as in Walajapet is pursued, except that here the police are almost entirely replaced by daily cooly watchmen. Beyond 8 coolies for special disinfection work, no special staff is employed, if the Plague Supervisor on the spot be excepted. The excreta of patients in this town are removed by the ordinary toties of the Union in baskets, which are taken from house to house and street to street for the healthy as well as well as the sick. No arrangement is made for clothing or special disposal of rubbish, nor for the receipt of sputa or other discharges. In one pneumonic case visited by myself and the Head Assistant Collector, the flies were walking over the patient's cheeks, mouth and eyes, and upon the floor were settled upon sputa, which must have been a mass of plague microbes. In another case, the rags from a bubo dressing were supposed to be burnt, but suspicious rags on the spot pointed to this not being the case. No enquiry had been made as to the despatching of clothing to dhobies. The toll gates are not watched for persons passing out infected, nor to secure their taking a pass under Regulation 34. The grave yards are not watched. I was informed, but forgot to verify the statement, that dead bodies are disposed of in the bed of the river Palar.

5 I have already expressed my opinion as to "home segregation" in para X of my notes dated X

concerning Vellore town. The Walajapet Council should be required to at once give full effect to G.O.NO.1985 M dated 18th November 1896 as to provision of staff, except that the mounted orderlies might be done without, the town being compact. The same principle should be followed in respect to Ranipet and Punganur. Under Additional Regulation NO. 6, Ranipet should

* up to 4:
March 1899.

will follow.
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should have had an Assistant Sanitary Inspector for the " observation " stage. The Divisional Inspector, as in Walajapet, should preferably have been a trained Sanitary Inspector; but, as in this district, local knowledge has been declared to be of greater value in dealing with sanitary matter than sanitary knowledge, I do not urge the point. Neither results in Vellore, Tirupati nor Walajapet seem to me to have given any force to the dictum. In Ranipet, it is pleaded that toties cannot be obtained; yet Tirupati is the great recruiting ground for other Districts. It seems to me unsound policy to pay the salaries of special plague Officers and yet be afraid of the cost of toties. Although Arcot, Ranipet, Walajapet and Pung~~in~~ are within a short distance of each other, the system of administration seems different. Thus, the Special Plague Officer's work is apparently confined to Walajapet. The Head Assistant Collector, with his Head Quarters at Ranipet, has but one " observation circle " in his charge, whilst the Supervisor, who is confined to Head-Quarter at Ranipet, has charge of three circles. It seems to me that the system pursued in these places would be benefited by the appointment of a single officer on plague duty to the charge of the whole area, including circles round the areas named, for not less than 10 miles radius. The circles should be " preventive circles " of 5 miles diameter. Complete arrangements should then be made, so that the ordinary conservancy staff and plant in this area, in such places as the District Sanitary Officer may consider necessary, be brought up to a standard for maintaining cleanliness by use of sufficient plant, menial and supervising sanitary staff, and that for epidemic purposes, in the infected localities, the organization laid down in G.O. NO. 1985 M dated 18th November 1896 be required as the minimum. All graveyards should be carefully watched and deaths be traced. Regulation 34 should be fully enforced, and be worked in conjunction with the circle observation system. Water sources reasonably regarded as open to pollution should be disinfected.

Dhobies

Dhobies should be supervised. The area surrounding Vellore should be supervised on the same principles. Tirupati Municipality. Four cases of plague have occurred here up to date. The infection was communicated by a case imported from Bangalore.

6 Observation Camp. A shed for males (120' x 12') and one for females (116' x 12') are in readiness. These are of a pattern that would not have been approved had any Medical Officer had a voice in the matter. They possess earthen walls throughout, and have ^{each} but a single entrance. The chief guide as to their material was that cooly labour happened to be cheap at the time they were required; hence, mud walls were employed. The area allowed is far more liberal than the Regulations allow, the calculation being 12' x 12' per head, against 10' x 12' for a family. Under this arrangement, the male and female members of families would necessarily have to live apart during segregation, and thus have good cause for complaint. Leaving the roof undisturbed, it would now be better to arrange the ^{two} buildings by means of bamboo matting into compartments, by making open passages completely through the existing walls, and allowing doors in the bamboo matting thus forming the new transverse wall. Thus the male ward might be divided into nine family compartments of 12' x 12' each, leaving 40' to be used for eight blankets in the wall thus brought about. No bathing space has been provided and no place for disinfection. Open earthen latrines have been erected.

7 The Plague Hospital is an absolutely unfit structure. There are two "mud huts" in all respects corresponding to native huts of the poorest classes. The only provision for ventilation beyond an undersized door, is a window in each wall measuring 1½ feet square. There is no further accommodation of any character for any person or necessary connected with the care of plague patients, unless the adjoining shed used for cholera be taken into account; but, this is equally unfit for the purposes of a Plague Hospital.

Hospital.

The pilgrim dwellings in this town necessarily are the great points of danger. For purposes of the annual festival, all pilgrim houses have had formerly painted upon them the number of persons that might be accommodated within them, as ascertained by measurement allowing 300 cubic feet per head in rooms with doors and windows, and 200 cubic feet in verandahs. These numbers have now been removed by the inhabitants. They should be renewed, and two sets of figures be made; in black should be registered the number of the resident family, in red the number of pilgrims that might be accommodated in addition. This would aid detection of the arrival of strangers. In several of the houses visited the latrines and back premises used by the householders and pilgrims were in a decidedly filthy state. Far more stringent action is necessary by the Municipality in enforcing prompt removal of night-soil, and of rubbish. The houses in which plague had occurred were visited. These had been imperfectly disinfected, and no arrangement had been made for the admission of light and air. Full directions were given to the staff.

9 A passport Officer is stationed at Renigunta, and another at Tirupati East. At Renigunta, the Officer complains that the Railway Staff will not allow him to see the tickets of the arrivals for purposes of ascertaining whether they have come from infected areas. He is entirely dependent upon their bringing to him such cases as they choose. This is a small but important matter that could be easily arranged.

10 No arrangements exist for examining pilgrims at Upper Tirupati. Hence it would be an easy matter for an epidemic to start in the midst of the damp, insanitary, and ill ventilated pilgrim dwellings there, without information reaching Lower Tirupati, till much mischief had been done. I have for years advocated the placing here of either a Certificated Sanitary Inspector or Hospital Assistant

Assistant, in the sanitary interests of pilgrims. I still think this course absolutely necessary. The grave yards in Lower Tirupati should be watched. I think that two peons on other duty would suffice.

// Registration. The Registrar of births and deaths is fond of entering causes of death under "all other causes". No such entry is permissible in the case of Municipalities. Care should be taken to state in as exact terms as possible the real cause of death; where there is doubt, the Hospital Assistant should be consulted by the Registrar.

W. H. H. H.

Lieut-Colonel, I.M.S.

Sanitary Commissioner for Madras.

Madras }
11.3.99 }

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